The Ise Stories

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Ise monogatari

TRANSLATED AND WITH COMMENTARY BY
Joshua S. Mostow
AND
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Textual Matters

Our translation is based on the copy of the *Tenpuku-bon* owned by Gakushūin University. Transliteration of the text follows that found in Takeoka Masao's *Ise monogatari zen hyōshaku* (Yūbun Shoin, 1987). Romanization represents historical *kana* usage *(kyū-kanazukai),* although proper nouns are rendered in Hepburn romanization in both translation and commentaries. The translation of ranks and titles follows Royall Tyler, *The Tale of Genji* (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2001).

In the commentaries that follow each episode, pre–World War II scholars are referred to in the past tense, and typically by their single pen name (e.g., Yūsai). For the postwar period, scholars are referred to in the present tense and, except for the key specialists (Katagiri and Takeoka), are identified by their full names (e.g., Abe Toshiko). Appendix A provides a list of the principal commentators and commentaries discussed. When no specific page number is given, references to Katagiri are to his *Kanshō Nihon koten bungaku,* vol. 5 (Kadokawa Shoten, 1975); all other unreferenced information, including citations of Japanese secondary scholarship, is from Takeoka.

References to imperial and other important anthologies are given for all poems. The numbering for all poems follows the *Shinpen Kokka taikan* (Kadokawa Shoten, 1983–1992; CD-ROM version). Where two numbers are given, the first is from the original edition and the second from the revised edition.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations for the poetry collections are as follows:

GSS	*Gosen (waka) shū*	951–955
GYS	*Gyokuyō (waka) shū*	1311–1312
KKRJ	*Kokin (waka) rokujō*	Heian period
KKS	*Kokin (waka) shū*	905
MYS	*Man'yōshū*	completed ca. 759
SCSS	*ShinChokusen (waka) shū*	1232–1234
SGSIS	*ShinGoShūi (waka) shū*	1375–1384
ShGSIS	*ShokuGoShūi (waka) shū*	1323–1326
ShGSS	*ShokuGosen (waka) shū*	1248–1252
ShKKS	*ShokuKokin (waka) shū*	1259–1266
ShSZS	*ShokuSenzai (waka) shū*	1318–1320
SIS	*Shūi (waka) shū*	1005–1007
SKKS	*ShinKokin (waka) shū*	1205
SShKKS	*ShinShokuKokin (waka) shū*	1433–1439
SSZS	*ShinSenzai (waka) shū*	1356–1359
WKRS	*Wakan rōeishū*	ca. 1012

Introduction

Japan's aristocratic age, the Heian period (794–1185), saw the emergence of the literary court romance, or *monogatari*. The best known of these works is without a doubt *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji). A fair amount is known about the *Genji* and its composition: it was written by a woman known as Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973–ca. 1014 or 1025), and we can deduce from surviving parts of her diary that at least a substantial part of the tale was completed by the year 1008. The *Genji* is a long work (1,120 pages in the standard English edition) that draws its readers into its narrative universe, creating an idealized picture of the Heian imperial court and its inhabitants and achieving what some have called the world's first psychological novel. Most modern translators have provided notes, chiefly in order to identify poems alluded to in the text that the modern reader, unlike Murasaki Shikibu's contemporaries, cannot be expected to have committed to memory.

The Ise Stories differs greatly from the *Genji*. Its authorship is obscure and multiple; its period of composition appears to have spanned decades, if not a century; and it is relatively short. More importantly, its brief, episodic structure hinders character development or even the telling of a continuous story. Instead the work presents a series of anecdotes and exemplary tales, the purposes of which have become obscured by time.

Nonetheless, the *Ise* and its poetry remain a literarily satisfying and interpretively exciting reading experience. And it is for its poetry that the *Ise* became one of the three most important texts in the classical Japanese canon, along with the *Genji* and the first imperially commissioned anthology of Japanese poetry *(chokusenshū)*, the *Kokinshū* (905). The *Ise* has been essential reading for every educated Japanese, male or female, for most of Japan's history.

Authorship, Title, and Texts

The authorship of *The Ise Stories* is unknown and plural. What is known is that many of the poems contained in the text are by Ariwara no Narihira (825–880). Narihira was the son of Imperial Prince Abo (792–842), a son of

Emperor Heizei (774–824, r. 806–809). In 810, the retired Heizei's consort, Fujiwara no Kusuko, together with her brother Nakanari, led an unsuccessful coup to attempt to return Heizei to the throne. As a result, Nakanari was executed, Kusuko committed suicide, and Abo was sent into exile. Abo was also reduced to commoner status and granted the surname Ariwara. He was later pardoned.

Narihira, although an imperial grandson, therefore served in the court bureaucracy as a commoner. The Ariwara developed close ties to another family, the Ki, and Narihira is believed to have been married to a daughter of Ki no Aritsune (815–877). Aritsune's sister, Seishi, was a consort of Emperor Montoku (827–858, r. 850–858) and gave birth to his eldest son, Prince Koretaka (844–897). (See Appendix B for a family tree.) The Ki and Ariwara therefore had reason to hope that they would benefit when Koretaka ascended the throne.

However, the latter half of the tenth century saw the political rise of the Northern Branch of the Fujiwara, under the leadership of Yoshifusa (804–872). Yoshifusa married his daughter Meishi to Montoku, under whom he became the first commoner to hold the office of Daijōdaijin (Chancellor) and wield effective political power. Meishi gave birth to a boy, whom Yoshifusa put on the throne as Emperor Seiwa (850–880, r. 858–876) when still a child. He then appointed himself regent *(sesshō),* establishing what was to become known as the Fujiwara Regency, through which the Northern Branch kept control of the government for hundreds of years by placing its daughters in the imperial harem and elevating the resulting grandsons to the throne while minors. Thus Seiwa was chosen as emperor over his much older brother, Koretaka, the candidate of the Ki and Ariwara families, who consequently suffered a further decline of power.

In the Heian period, important imperial figures tended to serve as the focus of salons or smaller courts, sponsoring cultural and religious events and projects. Koretaka's coterie included not only Narihira and Aritsune, but another former imperial prince, Minamoto no Tōru (822–895). All these men were recognized poets and litterateurs. It is in this environment that the original core of the *Ise monogatari* is believed to have been created. While earlier English-language scholars have tended to suggest that this core was some sort of collection of Narihira's poetry (such a collection was created, posthumously), contemporary scholarship sees the foundations of the *Ise* in somewhat more developed narrative episodes, following Chinese trends, in addition to stories connected to the composition of poems such as those found in Book XVI of the *Man'yōshū,* the first extant anthology of Japanese poetry, completed circa 759.

The only substantive historical record of Narihira appears in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* (The Japanese True Record of Three Reigns, 901), the last of the six official histories written in Chinese. There, under the date of his

death, he is described as (in the Japanese reading of the Chinese text) *taibō kanrei, hōjū kakawarazu, hobo saigaku naku, yoku waka wo tsukuru*. The first two of these expressions can be translated as "In features, elegant and handsome; in behavior, willful." Earlier scholars understood *hobo saigaku naku* to mean that he was deficient in the Chinese learning required for career advancement, and this tied in well with a view of the *Ise* as largely untouched by Chinese literary influence. Present-day scholars, however, interpret the line as "not the conscientious type" and are much more willing to credit Narihira with knowledge of continental literature. *Yoku waka wo tsukuru* means "he composed Japanese poetry well," at a time when the composition of Japanese, rather than Chinese, verse was still very much associated with women and the writing of love letters.

It is widely accepted that the *Ise* came into existence over a considerable period of time and with the help of many hands. The three-stage theory developed by Katagiri Yōichi has found general approval: the genesis of the *Ise* is to be found in a relatively small collection of stories and poems written by Ariwara no Narihira, necessarily before his death in 880. Poems from this now-lost *Ur*-text were also included in the first imperial anthology of Japanese poetry, the *Kokinshū,* commissioned in 905. This explains some of the similarities between the *Ise* and the *Kokinshū*.

The oldest section of the *Ise* includes the hero's secret meeting with the Ise Priestess. There is no historical evidence for this event, and modern scholars believe it to be a fiction fabricated by Narihira; nonetheless, the episode is also included in the *Kokinshū* as historical fact. Today it is generally accepted that the very title *Ise monogatari* comes from this story of an imperial envoy and an Ise Priestess, which now forms Episode 69 of the standard version of the *Ise*. Accordingly, while the title of this work is similar to many other literary court romances of the Heian and Kamakura periods *(Yamato monogatari, Kara monogatari, Genji monogatari, Sagoromo monogatari), Ise monogatari* does not mean "Tales of Ise," but rather, "a collection of tales, including that one about the Ise Priestess." It is for this reason that we gave our translation the title *The Ise Stories,* rather than the better-known, but inaccurate, *The Tales of Ise*.

Sometime around the mid-tenth century the text was significantly expanded, and the names of historical figures known to have been associated with Narihira and Koretaka's salon were added to it. It is presumably at this stage that poems by Narihira previously included in the *Kokinshū* were spun into the tale of his abduction of Fujiwara no Takaiko (also read "Takako," 842–910, known as the Nijō Empress), Yoshifusa's niece, consort to Emperor Seiwa, and the mother of Emperor Yōzei (868–949, r. 876–884). Imanishi Yūichirō has recently suggested that such lese majesty was possible because of the dynastic break between the Montoku–Seiwa–Yōzei imperial line and that of Kōkō (830–887, r. 884–887) and Uda (867–931,

r. 887–897) (See Appendix A.)[1] This is also the stage of the text at which the focus on "courtliness" *(miyabi)* was introduced. This celebration of courtly elegance is one of nostalgia for a time before the rise of the Northern Branch. It is believed that such additions were made by members of the Ki clan; some even suggest Tsurayuki, one of the editors of the *Kokinshū*, or his son Tokifumi.[2] Others involved may have included Narihira's son, Shigeharu, or even Lady Ise (Ise no Go), a contemporary of Tsurayuki whom most premodern commentators believed to have been Narihira's wife late in life and the final redactor of the *Ise*. If this were so, the title *Ise monogatari* might mean *[Lady] Ise's Tales*. However, Lady Ise's and Narihira's respective dates make this marriage impossible. Obviously, the association of the *Ise* with the Ki clan or with Emperor Uda, whose authority was finally usurped by the Fujiwara Regency, allows for a political reading of the *Ise* as resistance to Fujiwara no Yoshifusa and his descendants.[3] According to this reading, Narihira's abduction of Takaiko was an effort to disrupt Yoshifusa's plan to give her to the future Emperor Seiwa. These political readings seem to have been first developed in the late Edo period by such scholars as Motoori Uchitō (1792–1855) and Kanō Morohira (1796–1847).[4]

It is at this second stage of the *Ise*'s development that the figure of Narihira as an old man *(okina)* also appears. The role seems to have a generally celebratory function, and Katagiri interprets the *okina* as the implied narrator of the *Ise* as a whole.[5] The introduction of an aged Narihira also gives a sense of biographical closure to the text.

Finally, a last group of episodes was added at about the time when the third imperial anthology, the *Shūishū* (ca. 1005–1011), was compiled. The episodes typically resemble ones already contained in the text, in a kind of theme-and-variation development. In them, the character of the protagonist becomes almost a caricature, one clearly based on a pre-existing image of the "amorous" *(iro-gonomi)* Narihira. The episodes in the latter part of the *Ise* also take on a decidedly elegiac quality. Many refer to the passage of youth, love, and time in general, and the final episode is commonly understood to be Narihira's deathbed poem.

Several episodes of the *Ise* also appear in somewhat different form in *Yamato monogatari* (Tales of Yamato), a work believed to have been writ-

1. Imanishi, "*Ise monogatari* no keisei to sono haikei."
2. Senō Yoshinobu, "*Ise monogatari no keisei katei to danmatsu chūki,*" cited by Imanishi, ibid.
3. See Watanabe, *Ise monogatari;* Marra, *The Aesthetics of Discontent;* and Bowring, "The *Ise monogatari*."
4. See Vos, *A Study,* 1: 114–115.
5. See Katagiri, *Shinkenkyû,* pp. 26–29.

ten between 950 and 970, but centered around the court of Emperor Uda. In the *Yamato,* characters such as Narihira and Takaiko are identified by name. In *Sagoromo monogatari* (The Tale of Sagoromo, latter half of the eleventh century), the *Ise* is referred to as *Zaigo Chūjō no nikki* (The Diary of the Ariwara Middle Captain of the Fifth Rank), indicating that the text was now regarded as a historically accurate "diary" *(nikki)* rather than as a fictional "romance" *(monogatari)*.[6] This is confirmed in the vernacular history *Ōkagami* (The Great Mirror, ca. 1090), which relates Narihira and Takaiko's affair as fact. It is this status as history that allowed the *Ise* to be drawn on time and time again for the imperial anthologies: while poems "composed" by fictional characters, such as those in the *Genji,* were excluded, poems by the "historical" personages who appeared in the *Ise* were eligible.

The *Ise* reached its final state under Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241). Teika collated and copied the text a great number of times during his lifetime. Three of his copies were the most influential for later readers: the *Rufu-bon,* the *Takeda-bon,* and the *Tenpuku-bon,* which all differ in small but substantive ways. The *Rufu-bon* (literally, "the widely circulated text"), as its name suggests, was the text that appeared in woodblock-printed editions in the Edo period (1603–1868) and became the most broadly diffused. In the Muromachi period (1333–1573) the *Takeda-bon,* named after its one-time owner, the Takeda warrior house of Wakasa province, was more influential. Today, the preferred text is the *Tenpuku-bon,* dated Tenpuku 2 (1234), the year Teika completed it. Interestingly, Teika's colophon states that he made the copy for his granddaughter, making it clear that the *Ise* was considered important reading material for aristocratic women. The manuscript was owned at one point by the Sanjōnishi family, which copied it. The original is now lost, but the best copy is presently owned by Gakushūin University. It is attributed by some to Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), a major courtier, poet, and scholar of the late Muromachi period. This manuscript is the one that has served as the basis for all modern editions, although in recent years another copy, made by Reizei Tamekazu (1486–1549), has gained preference.[7] No annotated edition based on the *Tamekazu-bon* has yet appeared.

While Teika's version of the *Ise* became definitive, a number of "old texts" *(kohon)* continued to circulate, the most important being the *Nurigome-bon,* which includes more than 125 episodes and is believed to have been produced by Teika's poetic rivals, the Rokujō house.

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6. On the distinction between *nikki* and *monogatari,* see Konishi Jin'ichi, *History,* II: 251–260.

7. A transcription can be found in Katagiri, *(Ihon taishō) Ise monogatari.*

The Commentary Tradition

Today scholars divide commentaries on the *Ise* into three groups. The first, called "before the 'old commentaries'" *(kyūchū izen),* can be traced back to the mid-thirteenth century and are represented by the *Waka chiken shū* and the *Reizei-ke Ise monogatari shō,* as well as a number of texts attributed to Fujiwara no Tameaki (ca. 1230s–after 1295), a grandson of Fujiwara no Teika. Tameaki seems to have established a set of complicated tantric practices and exegetical techniques associated with the *Ise* in Kamakura, far from the cultural center of Kyoto. While Susan Klein dates the *Waka chiken shū* to 1265 and the *Reizei-ke Ise monogatari shō* to the early fourteenth century, the *Waka chiken shū* often rejects interpretations found in the Reizei school text, suggesting that the latter represents at least in part earlier interpretations.

According to Klein the *Waka chiken shū* exists in two lineages: the earlier Ietaka line and the Sanjōnishi, or Shoryōbu line. The latter was the more widely disseminated, and it shared mutual influence with texts written by Fujiwara no Tameaki and his disciples. These texts interpret the *Ise* through the left-handed tantric practices of the Shingon Tachikawa sect. An example is the *Gyokuden jinpi no maki,* which interprets the beginning of the first episode as follows:

> [In the opening line] the phrase "mukashi otoko" (the Man of Old) means "wagami" (my body). It is an indication that [Narihira is] Sumiyoshi's avatar. Sumiyoshi's Original Ground *(honji)* is Kannon. Because Kannon is the eternal Buddha who has no beginning or end, Narihira is referred to as "mukashi" (old or ancient). "Otoko" (man) refers to the Diamond Realm of Dainichi [Nyorai], which is understood as male. The women are Aritsune's daughters, [who represent the female] deity of the Womb-Storehouse Realm. The line "he went to the capital at Nara" means "for the purpose of aiding and transforming all living beings by bestowing an expedient device for their benefit, he took on ordinary human form and came into this corrupt world, forming a karmic link to humanity." . . . In this way, the essential purpose of this tale is to help us grasp the profound meaning of Shingon.[8]

While the Ietaka *Waka chiken shū* does not closely follow Tameaki's exegesis, it insists that Narihira was a manifestation of Kannon and that he brought enlightenment through sexual intercourse to 3,733 women. The *Ise*

8. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 243. Chinese graphs have been omitted.

is read as the record of his activities, focusing on the twelve women he felt best understood his ministry, including Ki no Aritsune's Daughter, Lady Ise, Empress Taikaiko, and Ono no Komachi.[9]

In the Muromachi period, the first of the second major group of commentaries—the so-called "old commentaries" *(kyūchūshaku)*—is the *Guken shō* of Ichijō Kanera (also read Kaneyoshi) (1402–1481), completed in 1474. Kanera heavily criticizes the Kamakura-period *Waka chiken shū* and Reizei school interpretations, opting for a secular reading that eschews the allegorical techniques of the previous age. Nonetheless, he still reads the *Ise* as an account of Narihira.

Kanera was followed by a lineage that originated with the famous "linked-verse" *(renga)* master Sōgi (1421–1502). Sōgi's interpretations were passed on through private lectures and lecture notes, the most important of which are the *Shōmon shō,* written by his disciple Botanka Shōhaku (1443–1527); the *Isei shō,* notes by Funabashi (Kiyohara) Nobukata from lectures delivered by Sanetaka; and the *Ketsugi shō* by Hosokawa Yūsai, based on lectures by Sanjōnishi Saneki (1511–1579) but also including selections from earlier commentaries, as well as his own opinions.

Yūsai's *Ketsugi shō,* published for the first time in 1597 and widely circulated throughout the Edo period, represented the *Ise* reading most commonly accepted during the early modern period—one often quite different from that constructed by modern philologists. This difference is obvious in the very first episode. Unlike modern scholars, Yūsai insisted that the man of every episode is none other than Narihira, although, following Sōgi, the sisters have now become anonymous and are no longer identified, as they were in the Kamakura-period secret tradition, as the daughters of Ki no Aritsune. Most importantly, Yūsai, like all previous commentators, took the second poem to be the sisters' reply, while today it is understood to be an editorial aside by the narrator (see translation, below).

The other influential commentary before the rise of the nativist "national learning" *(kokugaku)* movement was the *Shūsui shō* of Kitamura Kigin (1624–1705), first published in 1680. Using both interlinear notes and separate commentary sections to facilitate reading, Kigin gave selected quotations from Kanera, Shōhaku, the *Isei shō,* and the *Ketsugi shō.* He also included the interpretations of his teacher, Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653, a famous Edo-period *renga* master and one of the first to lecture on the *Ise* in public), as well as his own views.

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9. Bowring, "A Cultural History," pp. 436–437. Ono no Komachi was a poet in the courts of emperors Ninmyō (810–850, r. 833–850) and Montoku, and is counted as one of the Six Poetic Immortals (the only female among them) in the Kana Preface of the *Kokinshū.*

Finally, the third group of commentaries—the "new commentaries" *(shinchūshaku)*—are understood to have begun with the *Seigo okudan* of Keichū (1640–1701), completed in 1692. Keichū is viewed as the forerunner of the *kokugaku* movement, which brought a philological methodology to the examination of classical texts. Interpretations were no longer accepted simply because they had been received from a teacher. Instead, relevant texts were cited as evidence, and arguments were developed in a somewhat more logical manner.

For example, Yūsai had trouble with a sentence in the first episode: *kono wotoko kaimamitekeri,* "He spied on them through a crack." He explained it as follows: "*Kaimami* is to peep through the space in a fence. But here, [since] peeping is not elegant *(yūgen),* the expression must mean 'to see from a distance, or through something.'" In other words, Yūsai knew that the word *kaimami* means "peeping," but since peeping is neither romantic nor elegant, while Narihira is by definition both, the word must mean something else in this context. In contrast, Keichū cited occurrences of the word from the *Nihongi* (720), the *Taketori monogatari* (ninth century), and the *Yamato monogatari* to demonstrate that it always means to peep through a gap or hole. Keichū was also the first to establish, through philological analysis, that the second poem is not a reply from the sisters, but instead an editorial comment by the narrator.

Keichū's work was followed by the *Ise monogatari dōjimon* of the fiercely partisan Kada no Azumamaro (1668–1736), one of the founders of the *kokugaku* school. In question-and-answer format, Azumamaro took every opportunity to contest and belittle Yūsai's work. Perhaps the most curious aspect of his approach is his belief that the *mana-bon* versions of the *Ise*—Kamakura-period texts that transcribe the original Japanese into solely Chinese characters—were the work's original form. However, this position is merely an extreme version of a tendency, found throughout the *Ise* commentaries and evident in Keichū as well, to explain unclear words written phonetically by writing them with Chinese characters, which, unlike the *kana* syllabary, carry semantic weight. It is as though these Chinese characters were indeed the "true names" (the literal meaning of "*mana*") of the indigenous Japanese words written in *kana* (lit., "temporary names"). So, for example, Kanera explains the indigenous Japanese word *namameku* ("very pretty" in our translation), which appears in Episode 1, by saying that it is written with the Chinese graphs 哉媚 (*saibi;* lit., "extreme" and "flirt"), and Keichû quotes the Tang-dynasty Chinese romance *Yu xian ku* (J., *Yûsenkutsu;* The Dwelling of the Playful Goddesses), where the characters 婀娜 (lit., "flirtatious" and "graceful") are given the Japanese gloss *namameku.*

While Keichū saw the *Ise* as a mixture of fact and fiction, in which the facts refer to the historical Narihira, Azumamaro insisted that the *Ise* is completely fictional:

> The *monogatari* is written about "the man of old" from his capping ceremony to his death. One should not conclude that this "man of old" is Narihira. Evidence that it is not Narihira will appear everywhere throughout the tale. If the man in the tale were always Narihira in every case, then each time it says "a woman of old," how could we decide who it is? Beginning with the words "in the past" means that a specific year and month are not indicated. This is because a fictional *monogatari* is not a historical record.[10]

Finally, as Jamie Newhard has demonstrated, Azumamaro was actually morally opposed to the *Ise* as a whole, seeing it as lascivious and salacious. His "commentary" was in fact an extended polemic against the court poetic tradition of the Nijō school.

The last two premodern commentaries frequently referred to in modern studies of the *Ise* are the *Ise monogatari koi* by Azumamaro's student, the renowned Kamo no Mabuchi (1697–1769), and the *Shinshaku* of Fujii Takanao (1764–1840), both *kokugaku* scholars. As Richard Bowring has written, the *Koi* was the first work to resemble modern commentaries: it provided modern paraphrases of difficult passages and attempted to have each section make sense to the reader by providing one definitive meaning.[11] Nonetheless, Mabuchi valued the *Ise,* like the *Man'yōshū,* less as literature than as material with which to reconstruct the ideal *kodō,* or "Ancient Way," of Japan, a pristine native existence stripped of "foreign" influences such as Buddhism and Confucianism.

Newhard credits Takanao with being the first to demonstrate a truly literary approach to the *Ise,* "devoted to discussing how the language works to further the narrative . . . and to call attention to the expressive techniques it employs."[12] Regarding the first episode, for example, Takanao had this to say about the phrase "sisters lived" *(harakara sumu)* in the sentence "in the village lived two very pretty sisters":

> Saying "sisters lived" indicates without saying it that there are no parents, and is skillful. The passage is written [to suggest] how these sisters, living in the desolation of the old capital without parents, are very pitiful, and how one who sees them must take their plight to heart. Seeing such women, the feelings of one who knows *mono no*

10. Newhard, "Genre, Secrecy and the Book," p. 242, modified.
11. Bowring, "A Cultural History," p. 474.
12. Newhard, "Genre, Secrecy and the Book," p. 290.

> *aware* are in confusion. Why is it that Keichū and [Mabuchi] were unable to see this?[13]

Modern Commentaries and Translations

Ise monogatari presented a problem to scholars at the beginning of Japan's modern era. Its historical significance in the development of what was now seen as a national, Japanese-language-based, literature was undeniable, but its apparent celebration of illicit affairs and imperial cuckolding ran contrary to the Victorian-inflected morality of the Meiji period (1868–1912). In the first modern edition of the *Ise,* not published until 1890, Narihira was declared a patriot for his support of Prince Koretaka (and primogeniture) against the Fujiwara "usurpers of imperial authority." Two of the most complete studies of the *Ise* published before the Pacific War were by Kamata Masanori (1919) and Arai Munirō (1931). The latter, in particular, valorized the *Ise* for representing the oldest stratum of Japanese literature, supposedly free of any foreign (that is, Chinese) influence.[14]

The *Ise* was seldom translated into vernacular Japanese during the early modern era; the main example is the *Ise monogatari hira-kotoba* (*The Ise Stories* in Plain Words, 1678). The next vernacular translation did not appear until 1917.[15] The first English translation, by Frits Vos (1957), is an enormously scholarly work, but it has little appeal for general readers. In 1968, Helen McCullough published what has since become the standard English translation, *Tales of Ise: Lyrical Episodes from Tenth-century Japan.* As the title indicates, the approach of this translation was largely formalist, as the study of Japanese classical poetry was at the time dominated by New Criticism as practiced by Robert Brower, Earl Miner, and Konishi Jin'ichi. Such an approach emphasized philologically definitive interpretations for all episodes, focused on the aesthetic and lyrical, and valued the discovery of such tropes as irony and self-referentiality. Ironically indeed, the following year saw a revolution in *Ise* studies with the publication of Katagiri Yōichi's *Ise monogatari no kenkyū* (Research on *Ise monogatari*), one of the first works of modern scholarship to begin to explore the *Ise*'s involved commentary history. Katagiri was preceded in print by Itō Masayoshi, who in 1965 wrote an article exploring the influence of the esoteric commentaries on Zeami's Noh plays. These scholars were soon joined by Watanabe

13. Ibid., p. 291.

14. See Mostow, "Modern Constructions," pp. 108–112.

15. For more on Japanese translations of the *Ise,* see Mostow, "Modern Rendition," pp. 76–97.

Minoru, whose strongly political reading of the *Ise* influenced the work of Michele (Michael) Marra (1991). Marra was followed the next year by a landmark article by Richard Bowring, which presented in English for the first time a concise history of the exegetical tradition surrounding the *Ise*. This work in turn inspired scholars such as Susan Klein to delve more deeply into the esoteric hermeneutics of the medieval era.[16]

Translation, Commentaries, and Illustrations

Mukashi wotoko arikeri: these words, or variants of them, typically start so many episodes of *Ise monogatari* that for centuries they have stood for the whole work. *Mukashi* means "long ago," "in the old days," "of old," and so on. *Wotoko* (pronounced *"otoko"* in modern Japanese) means "a/the man," and *arikeri* "there was." The "man" is of course Ariwara no Narihira. For this reason Narihira has long been known, in connection with the *Ise,* as *mukashi wotoko.* This nongrammatical expression (*mukashi* is an adverb, not an adjective) appears in English writing on aspects of *Ise* reception as "the Man of Old."

"Back then, there was this man" is the way we translate *mukashi wotoko arikeri* in *The Ise Stories.* We did not choose it lightly. It sums up our approach to the translation.

We wanted the translation to have a fresh, appealing, and somewhat spoken character. "Back then," an expression as plain as the word *mukashi,* is certainly spoken language, but it is neither especially contemporary nor excessively casual. "*This* man," too, is a device often heard in storytelling. It effectively announces the chief figure in the story. The *Ise* authors, who cannot have foreseen the *mukashi otoko* of later centuries, wrote soberly and concisely. We tried to do so, too, and in this spirit we also allowed ourselves contractions (didn't, wasn't). At times these effectively set off the heightened mood of the poems. Our ambition was that each episode should give off at least a glint of feeling, grace, or wit. Wit in one mood or another pervades the work and is probably one key to its enduring importance.

We also aimed at accuracy, as most translators undoubtedly do. However, the commentaries that follow the episodes demonstrate how elusive accuracy is in this case. Centuries of effort devoted to elucidating the text have often led instead to confusion and dissension. Who are the characters involved? What are they doing, and where? What are they saying? What is

16. The 1972 translation by H. Jay Harris marked no advance from the McCullough translation and included none of the new research, such as Katagiri's. Scholars have largely ignored it.

the reader to gather from the episode? Is the tone one of reproach, regret, praise, resignation, or desire? What does this or that poem actually mean or imply? We therefore had sometimes to make our own decisions about where accuracy, or at least the best guess, lay.

In pursuit of accuracy in the translation we considered above all the readings reached by Takeoka Masao (1987), Fukui Teisuke (1994), and Akiyama Ken (1997); while our commentaries give particular prominence to the views of Katagiri Yōichi (in several publications) and Takeoka. Katagiri has long reigned as the dean of *Ise* studies. Takeoka, born in 1919, spent most of his career as secondary school teacher, earning his doctorate only in 1967 and moving to university teaching two years later. Influenced by the folkloric approach of Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), he takes at times a rather literal approach to the text. However, his complete philological analysis of the *Ise,* which followed a massive commentary on the contemporaneous *Kokinshū,* remains the only one published since 1939. It also quotes extensively from the analyses of all modern scholars and includes most of the major premodern commentaries.

To translate the poems, we chose to preserve the original 5–7–5–7–7 syllable count, distributed over five separate lines. Most of the poems rely for their effect on linguistic and rhetorical devices that do not pass readily into another language, but we did our best to give each one character and presence.[17] In short, we tried to make this translation of the *Ise* both informative and genuinely absorbing.

In the commentaries we have made the historically dominant, "traditional" interpretation of the episode available to the reader together with the currently accepted scholarly interpretation(s), when the two differed. The traditional reading understood the *Ise* to be an autobiography written by Narihira and later edited by Lady Ise. It had a major impact on Japanese cultural history, not only in poetry, but in drama and the visual arts as well.

To give some sense of the *Ise*'s visual reception, we have included the illustrations from the *Saga-bon,* originally published in 1608.[18] The *Saga-bon* imagery became the standard iconography for the *Ise* in the early modern period. It also provided the norm against which other artists worked, for example in the *ukiyo-e* or Rinpa styles.

17. A concise explanation of the basics of classical Japanese poetry can be found in Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart.*

18. Katagiri, *Ise monogatari, Keichō 14-nen-kan.*

The Ise Stories

Ise monogatari

1

Back then this man, newly come of age, went hunting on a place of his in the village of Kasuga, near the Nara capital. In the village lived two very pretty sisters. He spied on them through a crack. Their looks were so surprisingly out of keeping with their rustic surroundings that he couldn't contain himself. He cut a piece from the hem of his hunting cloak, wrote a poem on it, and had it taken to them. His hunting cloak was printed with a Shinobu leaf-tangle pattern.

kasugano no Young *murasaki*[1]
waka-murasaki no sprung from Kasuga meadows,
suri-koromo you impress my cloak
shinobu no midare with such Shinobu tangles,
kagiri shirarezu[2] they will never come undone.

Off it went to them, just like that. He must have felt this was the time for a touch of:

michinoku no Shinobu pattern
shinobu mojhi-zuri printed in Michinoku,
tare yuwe ni who then is to blame
midare-somenishi for so tangling my heart,
ware naranaku ni[3] when I know it is not I?

People back then were so impetuously elegant.

This episode is also discussed in the Introduction (pp. 6, 8–9).

Most medieval commentators insisted that the young man did not write his poem directly on the piece of cloth he had cut off, but rather tied the poem to the cloth, with the latter serving instead of the flowers or other flora that usually accompanied a poem.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* took the phrase *kari ni* not only to mean "went hunting," but also "temporarily," and insisted that Narihira was actually going to Kasuga as an imperial envoy:

> An imperial envoy was needed for a festival at Kasuga Shrine in Nara, which was to take place on the third day of the second month of Jowa [Jōwa] 14 (847). Since no one was available who met the stipulated conditions (a fifth-rank member of the aristocracy, of pleasing countenance), Narihira underwent the capping ceremony and was installed in that rank the day before (the second day of the second month). However, since a son of an imperial prince would ordinarily

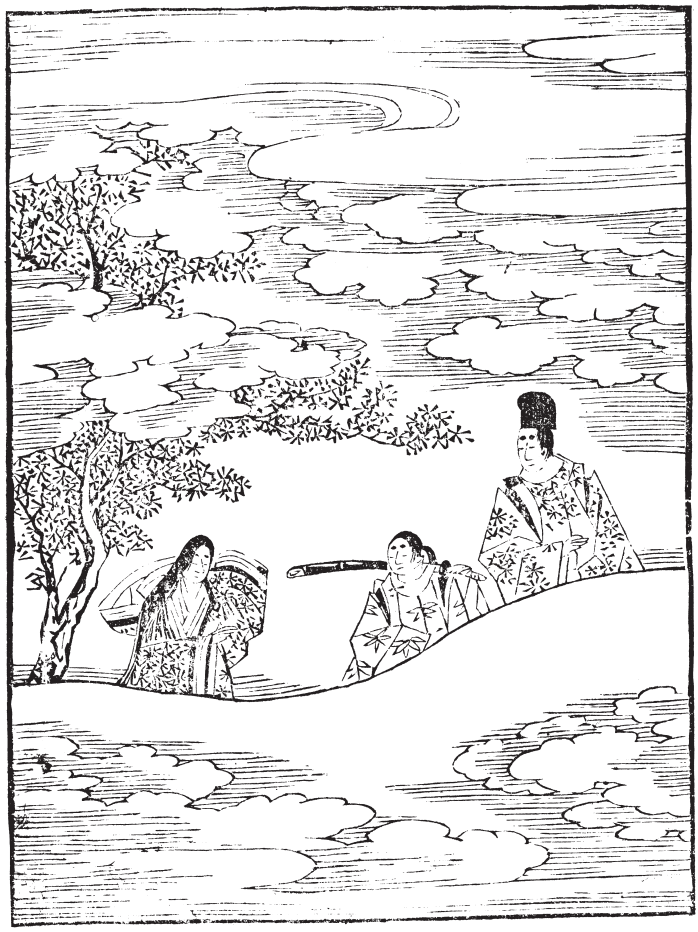
1. *Murasaki* is a gromwell *(Lithospermum officinale* var. *erythrorhizon),* the roots of which were used for a purple dye of the same name. It was often used in poetry as a metaphor for being "stained" with passion.
2. *KKRJ* 3309, anon., *"suri-koromo"; SKKS* 904, Narihira, "sent to a woman."
3. *KKS* 724, Minamoto no Tōru.

not have been used as an envoy, Narihira was only "provisionally" *(kari ni)* assigned to serve because of his exceptional looks.[4]

But the biggest difference between the traditional reading and the modern one is the treatment of the second poem. While medieval readers recognized the poem as written by Minanoto no Tōru (822–895), they could not believe that the sisters would not reply to the man's poem and so read the second poem as their response, quoting Tōru's poem for their own purposes. This interpretation is seen clearly in the *Saga-bon* edition, where the first illustration (p. 14) shows the man giving his poem to the maid to deliver to the sisters inside, and the second illustration (p. 17) shows the maid running after the man to deliver the sisters' reply. Such an interpretation changes the subject of the sentence *tsuide omoshiroki koto to mo ya omohiken* (lit., "was it because he/they thought it an amusing occasion?" translated above as "he must have felt this was the time for a touch of . . .") from the young man to the sisters, thus making them more the focus of attention.

Postwar commentators have drawn attention to the fact that, having just come of age, the young man would also have recently had an arranged marriage to a high-ranking woman on whose father his career would depend. *Ichi-hayaki miyabi* (impetuously elegant), then, includes not just quick-wittedness, but also a kind of violent ardor that refuses to be constrained by political calculation.

4. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 260, citing Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* p. 294.



2

Back then there was this man. After the Capital had left Nara, but still before there were many houses in the new one, a woman lived in the city's western district. She was worthier than most, for her heart even more than for her looks. Apparently she wasn't alone in the world. This earnest man spent some time with her and, once home again, felt somehow like sending her this. It was the first of the third month, and a fine rain was falling.

oki mo sezu Neither full awake
ne mo sede yoru wo nor stretched out asleep, I see

akashite ha night pass into day,
haru no mono tote then watch, until daylight fails,
nagame-kurashite[5] the rain fall, in thrall to spring.

The capital was moved to Heian-kyō (modern Kyoto) in 794. Since Narihira was not born until 825, this episode would predate him, but most commentators were not troubled by this anachronism. They were, however, troubled by the man being called a *mame-otoko,* or "sincere man" ("earnest man" in the translation above), since a sincere man seemed the opposite of the lascivious, or *iro-gonomi,* character of Narihira.[6] Early commentaries saw the wording as evidence that the *Ise* was written by Narihira, who was praising, or excusing, himself. Teitoku saw the expression as linked to the periphrasis of "She seemed not to be alone in the world," exhibiting a certain reserve since the woman was already married. In a similar vein, Takeoka seems to be unique among modern commentators in seeing this episode as following very closely from the first, with an inexperienced protagonist who has not, in fact, had sex with the woman. Yūsai suggested that the point is that even though the man is indeed "sincere," the woman is so exceptional that even such an upright man is tempted. Takanao took another tack and insisted that even among the lecherous there are those who are sincere and those who are not. Like some earlier commentators, he referred to the use of the term for Yūgiri in *The Tale of Genji,* when, despite being married to Kumoinokari, he is also seeing the Second Princess.

5. *KKS* 616, Narihira, "composed during a drizzle and sent to a lady whom he had been secretly wooing since early in the Third Month" (trans. Helen Craig McCullough, *Kokin Wakashū,* p. 139).

6. *Iro-gonomi* means literally "fond of color," that is to say, erotic passion. It refers to both men and women who are fond of romantic affairs or sexual dalliances, but in the Heian period it does not have the kind of uniformly negative connotation of any of its many possible English translations, such as "lascivious," "wanton," "lecherous," and so forth. Nonetheless, relations between a man and a woman outside marriage, and even more so relations (actual or perceived) between a woman and more than one man, are likely to start gossip anywhere. In Heian Japan, as elsewhere, most women probably preferred not to be gossiped about or to have a reputation.

3

Back then there was this man. He sent a woman he was after some *hijiki* seaweed, with this poem:

omohi araba	If you love me, sweet,
mugura no yado ni	any weed-grown house will do:
ne mo shinamu	come, lie down with me,
hijiki mono ni ha	even if to spread beneath us
sode wo shitsutsu mo	we have nothing but our sleeves.

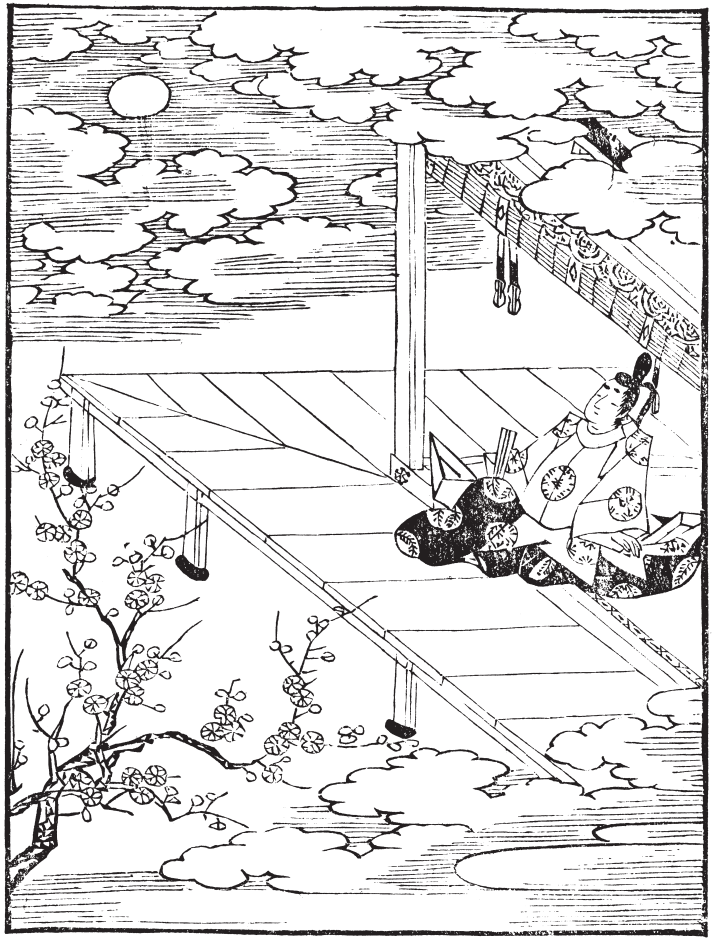
The Nijō Empress was still a commoner then; she hadn't yet entered His Majesty's service.

The first line of the poem means, literally, "if there is love," but it was usually taken to refer to the woman's feelings for the man ("if you love me"). More recent scholars, such as Takeoka and Morino Muneaki interpret it more generally: "if there is love between two people." Interpretations divide into two camps as to how to interpret *ne mo shinamu:* "then I could endure even sleeping alone in a ruined hut," or "you would not be loath to sleep with me even in a ruined hut." The former is followed by no modern scholar, but it seems to be the earliest interpretation we have evidence for, as seen in the *Waka chiken shū*. In fact, most medieval and early modern commentators seem to have read this poem through a *Man'yōshū* subtext, given by Mabuchi as:

tama shikeru	What use have I for
ihe mo nani sen	a house strewn with jewels?
yae-mugura	Let it be a hut enveloped
ohoheru ko-ya mo	by weeds eight layers deep,
imo to shi oraba[7]	if I am there with my love.

Many commentators took the ambiguous meaning of the first line of the *Ise* poem to be an example of what Tsurayuki complained of in the Kana Preface to the *Kokinshū,* concerning Narihira's poetry: "the emotion is excessive and the words deficient" *(kokoro amarite, kotoba tarinu)*. Takanao actually emended the first line, rather arbitrarily, to *omohi nakuba*. This version could then be translated as: "If I were not tortured by this bitter love, I could even endure sleeping alone, with my own sleeves as bedding, in a squalid hut of weeds, but due to this oppressive love, I do not even seem to be able to endure sleeping alone." Takeoka insists that the final comment about the Nijō Empress Takaiko should not be seen as something tacked on by a later editor, but as essential to the whole point of the episode since it makes clear that Narihira is asking her to reject a future life in the palace and the emperor's love.

7. *MYS* 2836/2825.



4

Back then a young lady lived in the west wing of the Empress Mother's East Fifth Avenue residence. This man was deeply, though unhappily, in love with her, and he visited her there. Then on the tenth of the first month she went to hide elsewhere. He learned where she was, but he could not go there, and this made his preoccupation with her even more painful. In the first month of the following year, with the plum trees in full bloom, he went to where he had called on her a year earlier. He stood and gazed about him, sat and did the same, but what he saw little resembled what he had known

then. Weeping now, he lay on the bare floorboards until the moon sank low, and his memories from the previous year inspired this poem:

tsuki ya aranu	Is this not the moon,
haru ya mukashi no	this spring not as in those days
haru naranu	springtime used to be—
waga mi hitotsu ha	while I alone linger on,
moto no mi ni shite[8]	just what I have always been.

Dawn was just breaking when, in tears, he went his way.

The Empress Mother *(ohokisai)* was Fujiwara no Nobuko (Junshi) (d. 871), daughter of Fuyutsugu, consort of Emperor Ninmyō, mother of Emperor Montoku, and aunt to Takaiko.

The meaning of the poem in this episode has been debated for centuries, the result being a numbing number of interpretations. Katagiri Yōichi provides a refreshing perspective on this controversy:

> . . . from long ago there have been many debates about such things as whether the *ya* of *tsuki ya aranu* and *haru ya mukashi no haru naranu* should be taken as simple interrogatives or as rhetorical questions, or how to interpret [the final two lines].
>
> However, as far as I'm concerned, these are nothing more than idiotic debates and idiotic questions. Unable to forget their last meeting the previous year, the hero comes to the same western wing as last year, and it goes without saying that what he is saddest about is that the woman he loves is not there. . . . The poem he composes there says: "Isn't the moon last year's moon? Isn't the spring last year's spring? Now that the only woman I love is gone, it feels as though everything has changed—as though even the unchanging moon and spring have changed."[9]

8. *KKS* 747, Narihira, with a headnote similar to the *Ise* text.
9. Katagiri, *Kanshō,* p. 55.

5

Back then there was this man. He was secretly visiting a house in the vicinity of East Fifth Avenue. He didn't go in by the gate because he had to keep out of sight; instead he came and went through where children had trodden down a crumbled part of the compound wall. The place had few callers, but he went so often that the young lady's guardian heard what was going on and posted a sentinel every night to keep him out. He went as before but left again without seeing her; so he made this poem:

hito shirenu May that sentinel
waga kayohi-jhi no who bars passage to and fro
seki-mori ha on my secret path
yohi-yohi goto ni each and every night that falls
uchi mo nenanan[10] succumb to the spell of sleep.

The young lady was absolutely crushed. Her guardian relented.

They say it was the Nijō Empress's brothers who posted the sentinel when word of her visitor got about.

While most commentaries read this episode as a continuation of the previous one and take the setting to be the same (that is, the Empress Mother's residence), the *Waka chiken shō* takes Takaiko (the Nijō Empress) to be living now at the home of her brother, Kunitsune. Being a man of feeling, he allows Narihira the occasional visit.

Debate has generally centered on who was said to be "absolutely crushed" after the poem was composed (the pronoun is not specified in the Japanese original). The *Guken shō* took it to be the man, causing the Empress Mother to feel sorry for him and relent. Keichū took the subject to be the Empress Mother herself (i.e., the Empress Mother was so upset that she let the man in), while modern commentators take it to be Takaiko (i.e., Takaiko was so upset that the Empress Mother let the man in).

In pictorializations such as the *Saga-bon* two of the guards are made to represent Takaiko's two brothers, together with a more warrior-like third guard. This pictorialization is based on a faulty reading of the text, according to which the verb *mamorase-tamahikeru* is an honorific and so refers to her brothers themselves standing guard, rather than as a causative *(shieki)* meaning that her brothers had a guard posted.[11]

Finally, Kigin explained the seeming contradiction between the poem's "secret path" (lit., "road back and forth unknown to others") and the guardian's knowledge of it by insisting that the poet *believes* no one else knows about it, thus imparting a psychological quality to the text.

10. *KKS* 632, Narihira, with a headnote similar to the first part of the *Ise* text.
11. Takeoka, p. 142.

6

Back then there was this man. Year after year he courted a lady he was unlikely ever to win, until at last he managed to abduct her under cover of darkness. The path he took led them to a watercourse called Akuta River, where she saw dewdrops on the grass and asked him what they were. They had a long way ahead of them, it was late at night, and he never realized that a demon lived there. Thunder was booming and rain pouring down when he installed her at the back of a broken-down storehouse and stood at the door, bow in hand and quiver on his back. He was still longing for dawn when the demon swallowed her in one gulp. She cried out, but the thunder

was too loud, and he never heard her. When day came at last he found that the lady he'd brought all this way was gone. He stamped his feet in frenzy and wept, but that didn't help.

shiratama ka	Are those pearls I see?
nani zo to hito no	What then can they be? she cried—
tohishi toki	ah, that on the spot
tsuyu to kotahete	I had only answered, Dew!
kienamashi mono wo[12]	and as quickly disappeared.

The Nijō Empress was then in service at the residence of the Consort, her cousin. She was so beautiful that someone carried her off on his back. Her older brothers the Horikawa Minister and Grand Counselor Kunitsune, both very junior at the time, were at the Palace when they heard a woman wailing, detained the man, and took her back. They were the demon in the story. Apparently she was extremely young then and still a commoner.

Several poems from the tenth century mention Akuta River in the province of Settsu.[13] However, the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* and the *Waka chiken shū* insisted that Narihira never left the capital and that all the references in the text to distant geographical points were in fact to places in Kyoto. Accordingly, Akuta River (*akuta* means "trash" or "rubbish") was believed to refer to a stream used for sewage that ran through the imperial compound. However, as Katagiri notes, there is absolutely no evidence of a watercourse with this name in the palace. Nevertheless, this interpretation helped explain the later, appended part of the episode, where the demon is identified as Takaiko's brothers—it was easier to keep Narihira in Kyoto than to get Takaiko's brothers to Settsu.

Later commentators such as Yūsai tried to get out of the contradictions of this text by insisting that this episode especially displayed the characteristics of a *tsukuri-monogatari,* or "made-up tale." Indeed, even modern scholars agree that the story seems to have been somewhat lamely created in order to explain the pre-existing, rather cryptic poem. The episode's fictionality may be linked to a somewhat surprising point of disagreement: why the man was equipped with a bow and arrows. Kanera claimed that it was

12. *SKKS* 851, Narihira.
13. Katagiri, *Kanshō,* pp. 65–66.

entirely reasonable that Narihira, who was a Middle Captain of the Guards, should be so equipped, but other commentators thought it strange he should carry a bow on such a night, and Shōhaku suggested the phrase was meant more to indicate Narihira's bravery *(kokoro no takeki tei to iheri)*.

The second point to exercise scholars was the woman's question—what kind of person does not recognize dew? Katagiri calls her "a sheltered princess" *(shinsō no hime-gimi),* as if she were so protected as to have never seen dew. Yūsai and most other commentators took her startled question as evidence of how frightened and disoriented the girl is in such dark and unfamiliar surroundings. Reizei Tamekazu (1486–1549), however, had yet another idea: "There is no way one could see a dewdrop in the darkness of night. Instead, this refers to a drop of semen falling down after intercourse between man and woman, forming Heaven and Earth. This is the beginning of Yin and Yang." [14]

Takaiko's older brothers were Kunitsune (828–908) and Mototsune (836–891) (although Kunitsune was the eldest son, he is listed after his younger brother because of his lower rank). Takaiko's cousin was Akiko, or Meishi, daughter of Yoshifusa, consort to Emperor Montoku, and mother of Emperor Seiwa. She was known as the Somedono Empress.

14. Kawahira Hitoshi, "Reizei Tamekazu sōden no kirigami narabi ni *Kokin waka shū Fujisawa sōden* ni tsuite," quoted and trans. by Carter, *Householders,* p. 197.

7

Back then there was this man. Life in the Capital became a trial for him, and he set off for the East. He was passing along the shore where the provinces of Ise and Owari meet when the sight of brilliantly white breakers inspired this:

itodoshiku	Growing distances
sugi-yuku kata no	draw behind me, as I go,
kohishiki ni	everything I love,

urayamashiku mo till with a pang of envy
kaheru nami kana[15] I watch the returning waves.

Episode 7 is the start of the famous *Azuma-kudari,* or "Journey to the East," section. The most common understanding is that, after his affair with Takaiko, the future Nijō Empress, came to light, Narihira found it prudent to remove himself from the capital, and so traveled northeast towards Mount Fuji and the Musashi Plain. However, both the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* and the *Waka chiken shū* insisted that he never really left the environs of the capital: the Sanjōnishi lineage of the *Waka chiken shū* claimed that he went to nearby Nagaoka to hide (see Episode 58), while in the Reizei school's *Ise monogatari shō* we learn that "the East" (Azuma) was in fact a code word for the Eastern Hills of Kyoto, where Narihira was kept under house arrest in the villa of Fujiwara no Yoshifusa, Takaiko's uncle. Accordingly, all place-names mentioned were taken to have an allegorical meaning. In the present episode:

> The phrase "Where Ise meets Owari *(Ise Owari no awai)*" signifies the final meeting *(owari no awai)* of the tryst between the [Nijō] Consort and Narihira. The graphs for *i* and *se* signify Yin and Yang. The word "final" *(owari)* is used because as a man and woman they had reached the end of their love tryst.[16]

Regardless of where he actually went, the point of the poem is that the poet sees the waves washing in and falling back, and he envies them their ability to return, or "go home" *(kaheru)*.

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15. *GSS* 1352/3, Narihira, "on seeing waves rising when he was crossing a river, as he was going towards Azuma and thinking longingly of where he had come from."

16. Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* p. 305; trans. (modified, with Chinese graphs omitted) from Klein, *Allegories,* pp. 271–272.

8

Back then there was this man. He must have been fed up with life in the Capital, because he set out for the East. One or two companions went with him. The idea was to find somewhere there to live.

The sight of smoke rising from Mount Asama in the province of Shinano inspired:

shinano naru	There in Shinano
asama no take ni	smoke from Mount Asama

tatsu keburi rises to the sky:
wochikochi-bito no a towering spectacle
mi ya ha togamenu[17] no one near or far could miss.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the companions as Ki no Aritsune and Taira no Sadafun (d. 923) and claimed that since they were old friends they joined Narihira in his house arrest in the Eastern Hills (see Episode 7). The Sōgi line of commentaries pointed out that since the man was having difficulties in the capital, it was unlikely he would have many friends, explaining the small number of companions.

The next problem was that Mount Asama cannot, in fact, be seen from the Tōkaidō (Eastern Sea Road) that Narihira would presumably take to reach Musashino. Yūsai suggested that a prodigious amount of smoke must have made it visible in the past; Teitoku pointed to the line in the following episode, "none of them knew the way, and they often got lost," to show that they have in fact lost their way and gotten off the Tōkaidō.

There are two main interpretations of the poem. The dominant one is that it is basically a sight-seeing poem, composed in surprise about a mountain the poet had never seen, or even heard of, before. This can be given a psychological twist, as in Yūsai's commentary, that even in the midst of all his woes, Narihira still finds charm in his surroundings. The other school of thought, starting with the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō,* took Asama as *asamashi* (wretched), and the smoke to be from the intensity of Narihira's longing for Takaiko. Kensai (1452–1510) insisted that this had a second meaning *(shita no kokoro),* with Narihira worrying that people "near and far" were stopping to stare and wonder at him in his grief.[18]

17. *SKKS* 903, Narihira, "composed on seeing the smoke rising from the peak of Asama, when he was making his way toward the East."

18. As reported by Kenjo; see Katagiri, *Ise monogatari kochūshaku korekushon,* vol. III: 15; cf. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 272.

9

Back then there was this man. Disgusted with his life, he decided not to stay in the Capital but set out instead for the East, to find a province to live in. One or two old friends went with him. None of them knew the way, and they often got lost. They came to a place called Yatsuhashi, Eight Bridges, in the province of Mikawa. The name described the way the river fanned out there, spiderwise, into eight streams with a bridge over each one. Under a tree beside the marsh they dismounted and ate some parched rice. The marsh was full of irises in magnificent bloom. The sight moved a companion to say, "Make a poem about our journey, with one of the five syllables of *ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta* ["irises"] at the head of each line." So he did:

KArakoromo Robe from far Cathay
KItsutsu narenishi long and comfortably worn,
TSUma shi areba bound by love to stay
HAru-baru kinuru I cover these distances
TAbi wo shi zo omofu[19] shrouded in melancholy.

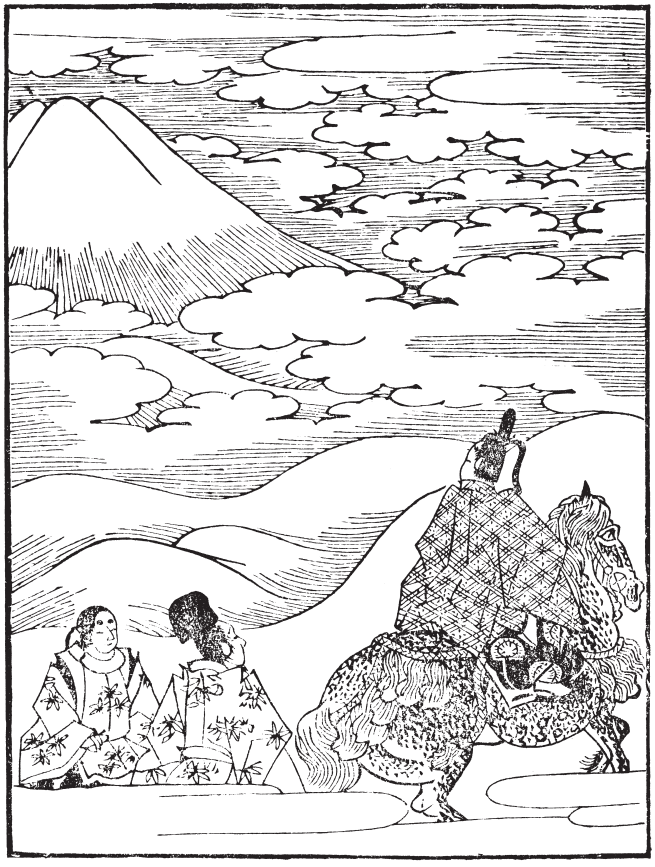
At this, they wept onto their parched rice till it got all wet.

On and on they went until they reached Suruga Province and came to Mount Utsu. The path across it was very dark and narrow, overgrown with ivy and maples, and they were feeling very depressed about their situation

19. *KKS* 410, Narihira, with a headnote similar to the *Ise* text.

when they met an ascetic. "What are you doing here, on a path like this?" he asked. The man recognized him. He wrote a letter for the ascetic to take to his love in the Capital:

suruga naru	Where in Suruga
utsu no yamabe no	rise the flanks of Mount Utsu,
utsutsu ni mo	neither the senses
yume ni mo hito ni	nor dreams ever gladden me
ahanu narikeri[20]	with the presence of my love.

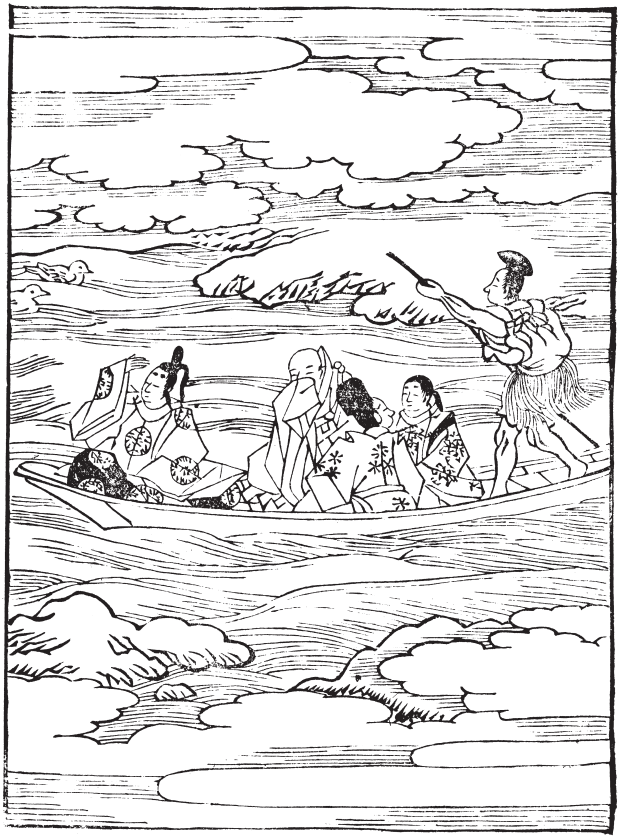


20. *SKKS* 904, Narihira, "sent to the capital, by means of someone he met on Mount Utsu in Suruga Province."

They saw Mount Fuji. It was the last day of the fifth month, and the summit was white with snow.

toki shiranu	A peak that ignores
yama ha fuji no ne	all seasons: that is Fuji.
itsu tote ka	What month is it, then,
kanoko madara ni	that fawn-dappled flecks of white
yuki no fururan[21]	should betray a fall of snow?

To compare the sight to something closer to home, the mountain was as high as twenty Mount Hieis piled one on the other, and it looked like a heap of salt.



21. *SKKS* 1614, Narihira, "humbly composed on seeing that white snow had fallen on Mount Fuji near the end of the fifth month."

They went on even further, until they came to a large river on the border between the provinces of Musashi and Shimōsa. It was called the Sumida. They clustered together on the bank and lamented having come so terribly far. "All aboard!" the ferryman cried, "The sun will soon be down!" So they got on the ferry to cross. Each of them missed someone in the Capital, and their spirits were low. White, snipe-sized birds with red beaks and legs happened to be playing about on the water, catching fish. These birds were new to them all; they hadn't seen any like them in the Capital. They asked the ferryman what they were. "Why, they're Capital birds *(miyako-dori),*" he replied. At this, one of them said:

na ni shi ohaba	If your name be true,
iza koto tohamu	then I will ask you something.
miyako-dori	Say, Capital birds,
waga omofu hito ha	of the one who has my heart:
ari ya nashi ya to[22]	does she live or has she died?

Everyone aboard shed tears.

Episode 9, the longest episode in the *Ise,* constitutes the Journey to the East *(Azuma-kudari)* proper, although *Azuma-kudari* in the broad sense can be taken to include Episodes 7–15. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* insisted that Narihira in fact never went to the Eastern Provinces: ". . . in truth, [Narihira] did not, feeling weary, travel to Azuma (the Eastern Provinces). When his abduction of the Empress of the Second Ward [Takaiko] became public knowledge, it is said he was placed under house arrest in Regent Yoshifusa's villa in Higashiyama (the Eastern Hills). The character for "east" in Azuma was taken [from Higashiyama]."[23] According to this interpretation, Yoshifusa actually helped Narihira and Takaiko to meet and sheltered Narihira from the wrath of the emperor. Such a reading then allows the episode to be interpreted in a highly allegorical fashion:

> The marsh *(taku)* [at Yatsuhashi] represents Yoshifusa's family. A person's rising fortunes are signified by a marsh. We call the benevo-

22. *KKS* 411, Narihira, with a headnote similar to the *Ise* text.

23. Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* p. 305; trans. from Klein, *Allegories,* p. 28 (Chinese graphs omitted).

> lence *(on)* of a sovereign *"ontaku,"* signifying that his favor is deep and wide as a marsh . . . A marsh is a place that is "enriched with moisture." So this marsh signifies the flowering fortune of Yoshifusa's family. The phrase "in the shade of a tree" *(ki no kage)* signifies the flowering fortune of Yoshifusa as a tree. As the fortunes of Yoshifusa flower, his house becomes like a large tree that many people gather under for shelter *(kage)* from the sun. The phrase "get down [off their horses] and sit" means Narihira came down from above the clouds [i.e., the palace] and was kept under house arrest in the Eastern Hills.[24]

It also interpreted Mikawa, literally "Three Rivers," to represent "the three women that Narihira truly loved": the Nijō Empress Takaiko, the Somedono Empress Meishi, and the Fourth Avenue Empress.[25]

On the other hand, the Sanjōnishi-lineage *Waka chiken shū* insisted that Narihira did not spend his exile in Higashiyama, but rather in Nagaoka (see Episode 58), at his mother's house, "a ruse abetted by [Takaiko]'s brother, the Horikawa Regent Fujiwara no Mototsune."[26] Medieval tales, such as those found in the *Kojidan* and *Mumyōshō,* related that Narihira's topknot *(motodori)* had been cut off in punishment for his affair with Takaiko and that he traveled the Eastern Provinces for three years while his hair grew back.[27]

As can be seen, all these readings understand this episode in the context of the previous episodes and believe that the man leaves the capital because of a love affair. However, as Katagiri points out, this episode was written separately, and the expression *mi wo eunaki* in fact refers to the man feeling frustration at his lack of advancement at court.

The water fanning out is literally described as like "a spider's legs" *(kumo-de)*. As explained by Mabuchi, the waters are flowing from a marsh in a way that resembles a spider (see Diagram 1).

The literal meaning of *kumo-de* was remembered at least through the Heian period, as evidenced by the following poem by Michitsuna's Mother:

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24. Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* p. 308; trans. from Klein, *Allegories,* p. 29 (Chinese graphs omitted).

25. Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* p. 307; trans. from Klein, *Allegories,* p. 273 (Chinese graphs omitted). Note that there is no "Fourth Avenue Empress" (Shijō no kisaki) in the *Ise*. It is presumably an error for the Fifth Avenue Empress (Gojō no kisaki), Nobuko/Junshi (see Episode 4).

26. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 224.

27. Katagiri, *Kanshō,* p. 71.

Diagram 1: Mabuchi's rendering of Yatsuhashi

kaheru sa no	On the way back here,
kumo-de ha idzuko	where did the spider's legs go?
yatsuhashi no	At Yatsuhashi,
fumi mitekemu to	I depended on my footsteps
tanomu kahi naku	being seen—to no avail.[28]

But at some point the meaning of the term was forgotten, and the bridge of Yatsuhashi came to be represented in a zigzag fashion, which in turn has become an icon of the *Ise* as a whole, as seen in the famous *Eight-Planked Bridge (Yatsuhashi),* by Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The iris poem is a tour de force. "Robe from far Cathay" *(karakoromo)* is a "preface-word" *(jo-kotoba)* that introduces "worn" *(kitsutsu)* and the other associated words *(engo)* "comfortably" *(narenishi),* "skirt" *(tsuma),* and "bound" *(haru).* All these words have double meanings: *tsuma* also means "wife" or lover, with whom the poet has grown "comfortable" and for whom he longs from far away *(haru-baru).*

Early commentaries identified the ascetic as Bishop Henjō, who is, like Narihira, one of the Six Poetic Immortals (Rokkasen) mentioned in

28. Arntzen, *Kagerō Diary,* pp. 371–373, with modifications.

the Kana Preface to the *Kokinshū*. The second poem plays on the name of Mount Utsu, since *utsutsu* means "reality." The poem sent to the woman back in the capital is actually one of complaint. It was believed that if you were thinking about your lover, you would appear in his or her dreams.

Mount Fuji is significantly higher than any mountain residents of the capital were familiar with, which is why the fact that it could still have snow on it in midsummer struck them as unusual. Katagiri points out that the narrator writes here as if he had actually seen the mountain himself, while comparing it to something familiar for his readers in Heian-kyō (modern-day Kyoto). Interestingly, the expression "as high as twenty" *(hatachi bakari)* was seen as evidence of Lady Ise's writing style by Yūsai's teacher.

"A heap of salt" is *shiho-jiri,* literally, "salt-buttocks." Salt water is repeatedly evaporated over large cones of sand and eventually boiled down to make salt. As can be imagined, this term caused difficulties for commentators. It appears not to have been in common parlance, and there was also the matter of its rather rude nature. Some commentators identified it as humorous, along the same lines as the seemingly comic exaggeration earlier of the men crying so much their parched rice gets all wet. Teika included a long note in his *Tenpuku-bon,* claiming that the meaning was unclear and just had to be left at that.

Both Japanese and foreign commentators/translators have often reduced the last, "Capital bird" poem to nothing more than a greeting card sentiment, as Katagiri complains: "Does all go well / with my beloved?"[29] But the poet's question is literally whether she lives or dies. Again, the person he is asking about is Takaiko, and medieval commentators suggested that the others of his party, too, may be missing parents, wives, or lovers. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* developed an elaborate allegory that makes the boat a symbol of the emperor (Yōzei, also identified as Narihira's son) and the ferryman the regent.[30]

29. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 76.

30. Katagiri, *Shiryō-hen,* pp. 312–313; partial translation in Newhard, "Genre, Secrecy and the Book," pp. 38–41.

10

Back then this man wandered on to the province of Musashi, where he took to visiting a girl. The girl's father had someone else in mind for her, but her mother had her heart set on a nobleman. While the father was no one in particular, the mother was a Fujiwara, which explains her ambition. She sent her candidate this poem. The family lived in Iruma County, in the village of Miyoshino.

miyoshino no
ta no mu no kari mo
hitaburu ni
kimi ga kata ni zo
yoru to naku naru[31]

The wild goose that haunts
the fields of Miyoshino,
startled, wings her way
eagerly to where you are,
my lord, crying she is yours.

The candidate replied:

waga kata ni
yoru to naku naru
miyoshino no
ta no mu no kari wo
itsu ka wasuren[32]

Crying she is mine,
she comes, so I hear, my way,
the wild goose that haunts
the fields of Miyoshino:
ah, how could I forget her?

He kept carrying on this way, even in remote provinces.

Much of the *Ise* is structured around a contrast between the courtly or elegant behavior *(miyabi)* of the capital-based aristocrats, and the humorously uncouth behavior *(hinabi)* of those in the provinces. In this episode, we have a conceited mother from the Fujiwara clan. Even though she lives with a nobody in the provinces, she still hopes to marry her daughter to a nobleman from the capital. Takeoka compares her to an "education mama" *(kyōiku mama)* who is determined to send her daughter to the very best university to find a mate. The term *mukogane,* "candidate for son-in-law," suggests her presumption. The overeagerness and excess of the mother's poem, especially, brands her as irreparably countrified. *Ta no mu* means both "surface of the

31. *KKRJ* 4380.
32. Ibid., 4381.

fields" and "to request"—an unusual wordplay in a love poem. *Hitaburu ni* means not only "eagerly" but also "to shake *(furu)* a clapper *(hita)* [to scare birds off a field]"—hence "startled" in our translation. Again, while *hita* is a perfectly good poetic word, Takeoka insists that it is rarely used with *furu* in poetry. The man's rather perfunctory reply—repeating almost word for word the mother's verse in four of his five lines—suggests his lack of engagement, according to both Orikuchi Shinobu and Watanabe Minoru.

Early commentators agreed on the nature of "this kind of thing" *(kakaru koto):* in Kanera's words, it was "the road of amorousness" *(kōshoku no michi)*. Modern scholars are much less certain, and some of the possibilities they have offered are: (1) the man's fickleness, (2) the elegant exchange of poems, (3) mothers attracted by social standing, (4) the mother arranging a marriage between a young man and a young woman. Takeoka paraphrases the line as: "The practice among the nobility in the capital of exchanging poems when courting (no matter how clumsy the verse may be, or whether it is by a proxy) is followed even in the remote countryside."

11

Back then this man, already well on his way toward the East, sent home to his friends:

wasuru na yo	Never forget me,
hodo ha kumowi ni	though the long way between us
narinu to mo	merges into cloud,
sora yuku tsuki no	till the sky-wandering moon
meguri-afu made[33]	at last comes around once more.

This poem appears in the *Shūishū* (ca. 1005–1011) with the following headnote: "When Tachibana no Tadamoto was secretly seeing someone's daughter, he thought to go somewhere far away and sent her this poem." Some commentators believed that Tadamoto's poem had been incorporated into the *Ise,* as had a number of poems from the *Man'yōshū* and elsewhere. However, Yūsai and others noted that Tadamoto's father lived during the *Kokinshū* era (early ninth century) and so postdated Narihira. They reasoned that Tadamoto had used Narihira's poem for his own purposes, much as they thought the sisters in Episode 1 used Minamoto no Tōru's poem. In support of this interpretation, they noted that in the *Shūishū* Tadamoto is not actually listed as the author, since his name appears only in the headnote. Scholarly consensus today is that the poem is Tadamoto's—Takeoka suggests that it was probably included in the *Ise* because it is such a good poem.

Despite the headnote explicitly stating that the poem was sent to his friends *(tomodachi-domo),* the Edo-period *Hira-kotoba* reads Episodes 10, 11, and 12 as one episode and, using the *Shūishū* subtext, has Narihira sending the poem through his friends to the girl of Episode 10.

33. *SIS* 470.

12

Back then there was this man. He abducted someone's daughter and took her to Musashi Plain. This made him a thief, and the Provincial Governor set out to arrest him. The man left her in a clump of tall grass and fled. "There's supposed be a thief in here!" the pursuers exclaimed, and they were about to set fire to the grass when in anguish the girl cried:

musashino ha	Oh no, please, today
kefu ha na yaki so	do not burn Musashi Plain!

waka-kusa no Tender as young grass,
tsuma mo komoreri my darling is hiding here,
ware mo komoreri[34] and I too am hiding here.

They heard her, seized her, and took her away.

Since the *Hira-kotoba* took Episodes 10–12 as one episode, it made the girl the same daughter of the Fujiwara woman and started its translation of the present episode with the following words: "Narihira returned, and although the mother had approved of the match, the father would not allow it, so Narihira met intimately with the girl and secretly stole her away." Bride-stealing was not uncommon during some periods of Japanese history and was often more in the nature of an elopement.

Earlier commentators, taking the woman to be the Nijō Empress Takaiko, had another problem: it seemed unlikely that Narihira would be able to spirit Takaiko away as far as Musashi Plain in the Kantō region (present-day Tokyo). Fortunately, the poem also appears in the *Kokinshū,* where the place-name Musashino is replaced by the much closer Kasugano (near Nara). According to Susan Klein: "The Reizeike-ryū *Ise monogatari shō* solves the problem with an elaborate story about a man from Musashi who died in the capital. His last request to his son was that he be buried on Musashi Plain. Since that proved impossible, his son had soil transported from Musashi Plain to build a tomb on Kasuga Plain; this burial site came to be called the 'Musashi Tomb.' Since this is where Narihira and [Takaiko] were hiding when they were discovered, in the episode the area was referred to as 'Musashi Plain.'"[35] This interpretation also appears in the Noh play *Unrin'in*.[36]

34. *KKS* 17, anon.
35. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 70, quoting Katagiri, *Shiryō,* pp. 317–318.
36. Trans. Earl Jackson Jr.

13

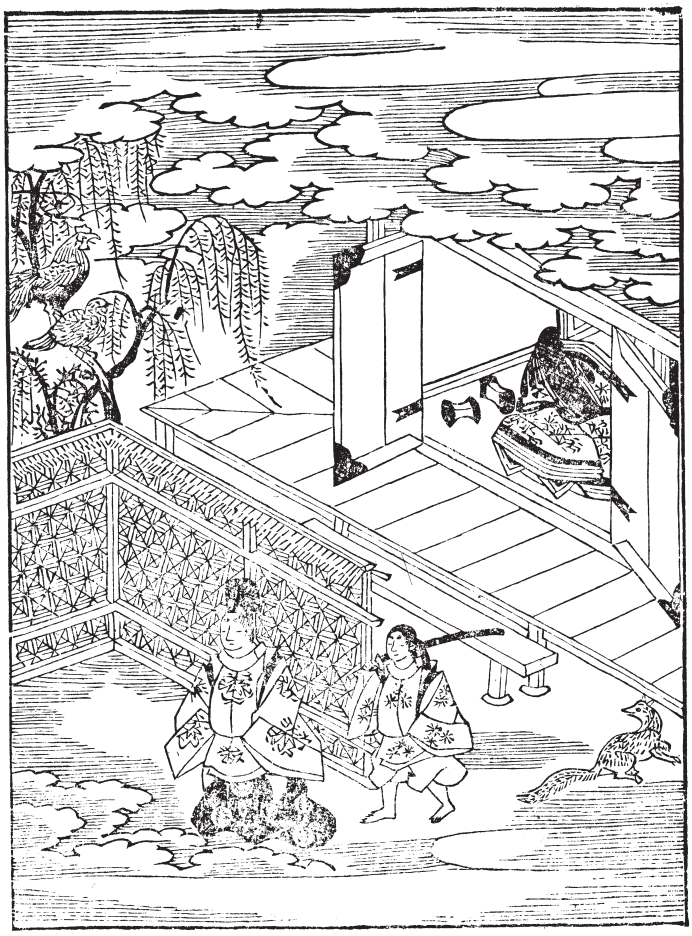
Back then this man wrote from Musashi to a woman in the capital, "I'm too embarrassed to tell you, but it hurts not to"; and on the cover he wrote, "Musashi stirrups." When nothing more came from him she wrote back:

musashi abumi Musashi stirrups—
sasuga ni kakete buckling to foolish hope,
tanomu ni ha I still care enough
tohanu mo tsurashi that mere silence from you hurts,
tofu mo urusashi and what news you send, I hate.

This made him feel terrible.

toheba ifu I write, you complain;
tohaneba uramu refrain, you seethe silently.
musashi abumi Musashi stirrups
kakaru ori ni ya hung on either side this way,
hito ha shinuran any man would come to grief.

A man visiting Musashi has become involved with a woman there, and he sends a letter to his lover back in the capital. He tells her that it would be embarrassing to have her hear of his affair from someone else, and he therefore cannot help telling her himself. According to Takeoka, much of the message is in the phrase written on the outside of the letter, "Musashi stirrups" *(musashi abumi),* which includes the pivot *musashi [ni onna ni] afu,* or "I have joined with a woman in Musashi," while the two stirrups on either side of a horse suggest the state of his dilemma of whether to tell her or not. The woman picks up on the stirrup image and uses it in her poem, saying that she too feels in a dilemma: although he has fallen in love with someone else, nevertheless (*sasuga ni* being a pivot-word that means "nevertheless" as well as *sasugane,* the buckle of a stirrup), she still "hangs" *(kakete)* her heart on him and relies on him. If he does not enquire after her, she is bitter, but if he does, she is at a loss how to respond. The woman's dilemma creates yet another one for the man, who now does not know whether he should write to her or not, which leads him to the suggestion that in "such a situation" (*kakaru ori,* where *kakaru* is a pivot-word [*kake-kotoba*] meaning both "such" and "to hang," with "Musashi stirrups" functioning as a pillow-word [*makura-kotoba*] to introduce the second meaning), it might be better just to die.



14

Back then this man wandered on to the province of Michinoku. A woman there must have thought someone from the Capital a wonder indeed, because she seemed extremely taken with him. In fact, she sent him:

naka-naka ni
kohi ni shinazu ha
kuhako ni zo
narubekarikeru
tama no wo bakari

So if, after all,
I am not to die of love,
I know just the thing:
I should have been a silkworm,
for that little life's short span.

Even her poem reeked of the country. Still, he went and slept with her—he must have felt she had something. When he left, very late that night, she said:

yo mo akeba Come dawn's early light
kitsu ni hamenade oh yes, in the tank you go,
kutakake no you obnoxious bird,
madaki ni nakite to learn to cock-a-doodle
sena wo yaritsuru my darling away too soon.

He remarked that he was off to the capital and added:

kurihara no If the Aneha
aneha no matsu no Pine here at Kurihara
hito naraba only were human
miyako no tsuto ni "Come along with me," I'd say,
iza to ihamashi wo "you're my gift to the City."

That pleased her very much. "I think he's in love with me," she kept saying.

The first poem seems to be a reworking of *Man'yōshū* 3100/3086:

naka-naka ni Not this lukewarm
hito to arazu ha life that we humans live—
kuhako ni mo a silkworm
naramashi mono wo I would rather be,
tama no wo bakari however short its life.

Katagiri claims that the *Ise* poem, too, has a very archaic "*Man'yō* feel." But it is the use of the word *kuhako* (silkworm) that makes the poem irremediably rustic. Silkworms live for only a year, but it was popularly believed that male and female silkworms spun themselves into one cocoon[37]—the woman will take a short life in return for deep vows.

The narrator marvels that anyone could be so rustic that even the inherently elegant medium of poetry is affected. Nonetheless, the man feels some kind of pity and sleeps with the woman anyway. He does not, however, care

37. Vos, *A Study,* II: 78.

for her enough to stay until dawn, as would be proper, but instead leaves her while it is still night. The woman appears not to be cultivated enough even to notice the slight, and she instead blames the man's departure on the ill-timed crowing of the rooster—which she then promises to drown!

The woman's second poem includes a number of words in northern dialect, which long caused confusion to commentators. As seen in the *Saga-bon* illustration, the most common interpretation of the word *kitsu* was "fox" (from *kitsune*), which in turn required the verb *hame* to be interpreted as "to have eat" rather than "to submerge," yielding "I'll feed it to the fox."

The disdain in which the nobility of the Capital held those of the country is reinforced by the man's insulting parting message. His prose message sarcastically uses honorific language towards her *(makaru)* and then in essence tells her that if only she were human, he would take her back to the capital as a memento. Some commentators, perhaps in an attempt to soften the cruelty of the episode, insisted that the man would not take her because she was already married.

15

Back then he called on some insignificant fellow's wife in the province of Michinoku and was surprised to find her quite unlike what he'd expected.

shinobu yama	Ah, Mount Shinobu,
shinobite kayofu	I would gladly find a way
michi mogana	in secret to frequent her,
hito no kokoro no	that I might further explore
oku mo mirubeku[38]	the recesses of her heart.

She thought him very splendid indeed, but what could he possibly have gained from looking into a heart as mean and crabbed as that?

The poem is centered on the sound repetition of *shinobu yama / shinobite, shinobu* being a place-name and *shinobite* meaning "secretly."

The comment following the poem has usually been taken to express the woman's apprehension. ("She was immensely flattered. But what would happen, she wondered, when he found that it was after all nothing but the heart of a simple rustic"[39]), which discourages her from responding. However, as Takeoka points out, there is no indication of the narrative past *(-keri)* after the poem—everything after the report of the woman's thought is the evaluative comment of the narrator. This more censorious interpretation is the one followed by all recent scholars. The woman is said to have the heart of a "northern barbarian" *(ebisu),* the name for the aboriginal inhabitants of northern Japan. *Ebi* is a lobster or prawn, hence the translation "crabbed."

38. *KKRJ,* anon.; *SCSS* 942/4, Narihira, "sent to a woman as he was going to Michinokuni."

39. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 80.

16

Back then there was a man named Ki no Aritsune. He had served three reigns and served them well, but then the times and his fortune changed, and his circumstances now little resembled those of others. His gentle kindness and his taste for all things noble, too, made him unlike other men. Despite his poverty, he knew at heart no more of the common world than he had in his better days. In time his wife of many years left him to join her elder sister as a nun. Intimacy had long since ceased between them, but her departure moved him deeply. Unfortunately, he was too poor to be able to do anything for her. Utterly at a loss, he wrote to a close friend, "So she is going, you see, and I must send her off without making the slightest gesture of farewell." He added at the end:

te wo worite
ahimishi koto wo
kazofureba
towo to ihitsutsu
yotsu ha henikeri

Fingers crooked to count
the years she and I have shared
our lives together
tally, one by one, the tens
all the way to a full four.

The friend felt very sorry for him when he read this, and he sent him not only clothing, but also bedding, accompanied by:

toshi dani mo
towo tote yotsu ha
henikeru wo
iku tabi kimi wo
tanomi-kinuramu[40]

Reckoning by tens,
a full four make up the years
you have shared with her:
ah, how many times, my friend,
she must then have turned to you!

Then Aritsune:

kore ya kono
ama no ha-goromo
mube shi koso
kimi ga mikeshi to
tatematsurikere

This in very truth
is an angel's feather robe:
anyone can tell,
for it is you, no other,
who have worn it as your own!

40. *ShSZS* 1542/1539, Narihira.

He could not contain his joy:

aki ya kuru	Is autumn coming,
tsuyu ya magafu to	assuring my eyes they see
omofu made	an expanse of dew?
aru ha namida no	But no, these drops have clearly
furu ni zo arikeru[41]	fallen in a shower of tears!

Ki no Aritsune (815–877) was ten years Narihira's senior. According to the *Kokinshū* and the *Sonpi bunmyaku,* Narihira was married to Aritsune's Daughter. Aritsune's younger sister, Seishi, was a *kōi* (Intimate, or a lesser-ranking imperial consort) of Emperor Montoku and gave him his first son, Prince Koretaka. The fortunes of the Ki and Ariwara clans rested on Koretaka being named emperor, but he was pushed aside by Fujiwara no Yoshifusa's grandson, who became Emperor Seiwa. This is the change in fortune alluded to above. Yet, while the narrator of the *Ise* portrays Aritsune as impoverished, Katagiri notes that even in 873 Aritsune was Provisional Governor of Shinano and held Senior Fifth Rank Lower, so that he probably was far from poor.

As early as the *Guken shō* we find reference to an interpretation of the first poem that takes the time span to be fourteen years, rather than forty. This reading was also championed by Azumamaro and, in modern times, by Katagiri. Katagiri argues that forty years is too long and that an old woman in her sixties would not abandon her husband. He further finds the use of the adverbial particle *dani* (the second word in the second poem) strange: *dani* "shows the lower limit or minimum amount or extent of something,"[42] which seems inappropriate for a span of forty years.

Finally, there are disagreements among modern scholars about the status of the last two poems: Katagiri insists that the excessive politeness (including *tatematsuru,* an extreme honorific for "to wear") gives absolutely no feeling of friendship between the two men, and the poems must therefore be attributed to a later redactor. Takeoka admits that the poems were no doubt originally composed for other contexts (there is no evidence to confirm Aritsune's authorship) but points out the potential pun in *ama* ("angel," but also "nun") and claims that the poems are integral to the point of the episode as a whole.

41. *SKKS* 1496, Ki no Aritsune, "when Lord Narihira sent some clothing."
42. Ikeda, *Classical Japanese Grammar,* p. 238.

17

A man who had not come for ages turned up to see a lady's cherry blossoms in their glory; at which she:

ada nari to
na ni koso tatere
sakura-bana
toshi ni mare naru
hito mo machikeri[43]

You know what they say—
Now you see them, now you don't—
about cherry blossoms;
but I have still awaited
only you, all year so rare.

He replied:

kefu kozu ha
asu ha yuki to zo
furinamashi
kiezu ha ari to mo
hana to mimashi ya[44]

Had I not come today,
tomorrow fallen petals
would have lain like snow
still unmelted, possibly,
but not for me real blossoms!

Exceptionally, this episode does not start with the word *mukashi* (back then), much to the consternation of commentators. Yūsai claimed that consequently Kanera saw this episode as simply a continuation of the preceding, although this reading is not evident in Kanera's extant *Guken shō*. At any rate, in the traditional reading of the *Ise,* Narihira is understood to have now returned to the capital from his travels in the East.

These poems are included in the *Kokinshū* in the Spring, rather than Love, section. As pointed out by Kenshō (ca. 1129–ca. 1210), the headnote does not have the word "woman" but only speaks of "the owner" *(aruji)*. Takeoka suggests that both the owner and the visitor were men, amusing themselves by affecting the elegance of continental literati hinting at love by means of the cherry blossoms.

43. *KKS* 62, anon., "composed when someone called during the height of the cherry-blossom season after having stayed away a long time" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 25).
44. *KKS* 63, Narihira, "reply."

18

Back then there was a woman with pretensions to sensibility. This man lived nearby. Since she wrote poetry she decided to test him by sending him this, accompanied by a frost-touched chrysanthemum she had picked:

kurenawi ni
nihofu ha idzura
shira-yuki no
eda mo towowo ni
furu ka to mo miyu

Where can it have gone,
that nicely reddening blush?
To my eye it seems
your boughs bend beneath the weight
of a pure white fall of snow.

He replied as though he had not understood:

kurenawi ni	This chrysanthemum
nihofu ga uhe no	white as driven snow above,
shira-giku ha	blushing red below,
worikeru hito no	to my eye could as well be
sode ka to mo miyu	the sleeves of her who picked it.

While the poems of this episode are grammatically clear enough, there are two major points of disagreement in the prose. The first is the definition of *nama-gokoro* ("pretensions to sensibility" in the translation above). *Nama* can mean "raw" or "fresh" (the latter meaning was seen in Episode 1, describing the sisters); it can also mean something like "half-baked." Interpretations range from "inexperienced" to "pretentious." But the dominant premodern interpretation was that the term meant "amorous *(iro-gonomi)*," and the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the woman as Ono no Komachi, whom medieval tales portrayed as having had an affair with Narihira.

This then leads to the question of who is being referred to as *uta wo yomu hito* (a person who composes poems)—the man or the woman? Support for the first option can be found in as authoritative a commentator as Keichū, while Sanetaka mentioned both possibilities.

There result from these differences several very different readings: a young, inexperienced girl whose poetic skills are still immature; a pretentious poetaster who brazenly challenges an acknowledged master; or a famous lusty female poet who sends our hero a "come hither" verse.

19

Back then this man got involved with a woman who served a gentlewoman at the Palace, but he soon dropped her. She saw him all the time, since they frequented the same residence, but he completely ignored her. She gave him this:

ama-gumo no Do I have it right?
yoso ni mo hito no Off you go, sailing away,
nari-yuku ka out beyond the clouds,
sasuga ni me ni ha even while, before my eyes,
miyuru monokara[45] there you are, plain as can be.

He replied:

ama-gumo no I will tell you why
yoso ni nomi shite I spend my time far away,
furu koto ha out beyond the clouds:
waga wiru yama no on the mountain I call home,
kaze hayami nari[46] there blows such a mighty wind.

He meant she had another lover.

This exchange of poems also appears in the *Kokinshū*, with the following headnote: "Narihira had married the daughter of Ki no Aritsune, but because of some affront, for a time he came to visit during the day but returned home in the evening. [Someone] sent him this poem."[47] The poem is not attributed to the woman herself, and *Kokinshū* commentators such as Ozawa Masao take the author to be Aritsune.[48] *Ise* commentators, however, attributed the poem directly to the woman.

Information included in imperial anthologies such as the *Kokinshū* was

45. *KKS* 784, Aritsune's Daughter.
46. Ibid., 785, Narihira.
47. Rodd, *Kokinshū*, p. 274. The first two lines of the reply poem in the *Kokinshū* are *yukikaheri / sora ni nomi shite* ("coming and going / in the vacant sky"), which fit well with the fact that Narihira is not staying at the woman's house at night.
48. Ozawa, *Kokin waka shū*, p. 302.

understood to be factual, and it is on the basis of the *Kokinshū*'s headnote to these poems that it was believed that Narihira was married to Aritsune's Daughter. This in turn meant that commentators such as Sōgi identified the young girl in Episode 23 as the same woman. In that episode she is presented as the model of a chaste wife, which then caused problems for the interpretation of Episode 19, where she is being accused of being "fast." For this reason, Yūsai argued that the woman should be seen as someone else.

At any rate, the original exchange given in the *Kokinshū* has clearly been fictionalized in the *Ise*. What was probably originally a disagreement between Narihira and his father-in-law is now laid at the woman's door: she has another lover.

The man and woman are serving together at court—traditionally identified as that of the Somedono Empress Meishi. Yūsai was particularly impressed by the woman's metaphor: though clouds can be seen, they are always distant.

20

Back then this man got involved with a woman in Yamato and visited her every night. Eventually he went back to the Palace, since he was in service there. On his way, in the third month, he picked a beautiful branch of red maple leaves and sent it to her with this:

kimi ga tame
taworeru eda ha
haru nagara

For you, only you,
braving the commands of spring,
this branch I picked you—

kaku koso aki no
momojhi shinikere[49]

look!—has clothed itself instead
in the deep red of autumn.

Her answer reached him after he got back to the Capital:

itsu no ma ni
utsurofu iro no
tsukinuran
kimi ga sato ni ha
haru nakarurashi

When did it happen,
this stain of fleeting color
on your leafy branch?
Apparently, where you live
there is no such thing as spring.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* took the woman of this episode to be the same as the previous one, Ki no Aritsune's Daughter, in a kind of flashback to her early courtship with Narihira.

For such a relatively simple exchange, it is fascinating that the man's poem seems to have been consistently misread during much of the *Ise*'s history: rather than understanding him to be presenting the woman with the unseasonably crimson leaves as a sign of his deep-stained passion, most commentators saw him making a pun on the word *aki,* which means not only "autumn" but also "surfeit" or "satiety"—in other words, he is asking the woman if she has tired of him. This interpretation was reinforced by the explanation that the crimson leaves in spring must be "diseased leaves" or *wakura-ba; wakuraba* also means "by chance," suggesting a questioning, rather than declamatory, stance in the man's poem.

In fact, however, it is the woman who asks this question, on one hand activating the double meaning of *aki* that was dormant in the man's verse, while on the other hand not actually using the word herself. It was the skill of this retort that was valued by the compiler, bringing to a brilliant conclusion the sequence of exemplary poetic replies—called "a collection of model poetic exchanges" *(zōtōka no tehon-shū)* by Takeoka—that started with Episode 17.

49. *GYS* 1606/1614, Narihira "when it was only the third month, he tore off a branch of oak whose leaves had already turned and sent it to a woman's house."

21

Back then a man and a woman were wholly devoted to each other. Some little thing, though, whatever it may have been, caused the man such despair that he decided to leave. He wrote this on something in the house:

idete inaba When you find me gone,
kokoro karoshi to you may all too easily
ihi ya sen call me fainthearted,
yo no arisama wo little knowing as you do
hito ha shiraneba[50] what this world of ours is like.

Then he left.

The woman read it. Unable to imagine what she had done to deserve this and desperate to know what had made him do it, she wept bitterly and set out to follow him wherever he might go. She went out to the gate and looked this way and that, but she couldn't tell which way to go and so went back in again.

omofu kahi Giving you my love
naki yo narikeri then meant nothing in the end.
toshi-tsuki wo All those months and years
ada ni chigirite I pledged to my life with you—
ware ya sumahishi did I not speak from the heart?

she murmured, lost in thought.

hito ha isa Do you (could it be?)
omohi-yasuran really love me after all?
tama-kadzura O my tendril wreath,
omo-kage ni nomi my darling, you come to me
itodo mietsutsu[51] more and more, and almost real.

Much later on, presumably when she could bear it no more, she sent him this:

ima ha tote After all this time,
wasururu kusa no with your thoughts straying from me,

50. *KKRJ* 2471, "Narihira (according to some texts)."
51. *SCSS* 950.

tane wo dani I have one last hope:
hito no kokoro ni never to sow in your heart
makasezu mogana[52] seeds of forgetting-lily.

He answered:

wasure-gusa Forgetting-lilies:
ufu to dani kiku if I ever hear the news
mono naraba you are planting them,
omohikeri to ha I will know without a doubt
shiri mo shinamashi[53] that you love me after all.

They began writing to each other far more than they had ever done in the old days. He sent her:

wasururan to In my heart of hearts
omofu kokoro no I am constantly afraid
utagahi ni you may forget me,
arishi yori ke ni till I feel a greater pain
mono zo kanashiki[54] than I ever did before.

She replied:

naka-zora ni Up there in the sky
tachi-wiru kumo no clouds take shape and float about,
ato mo naku only to vanish;
mi no hakanaku mo just so I, too, hardly know
narinikeru kana[55] what is to become of me.

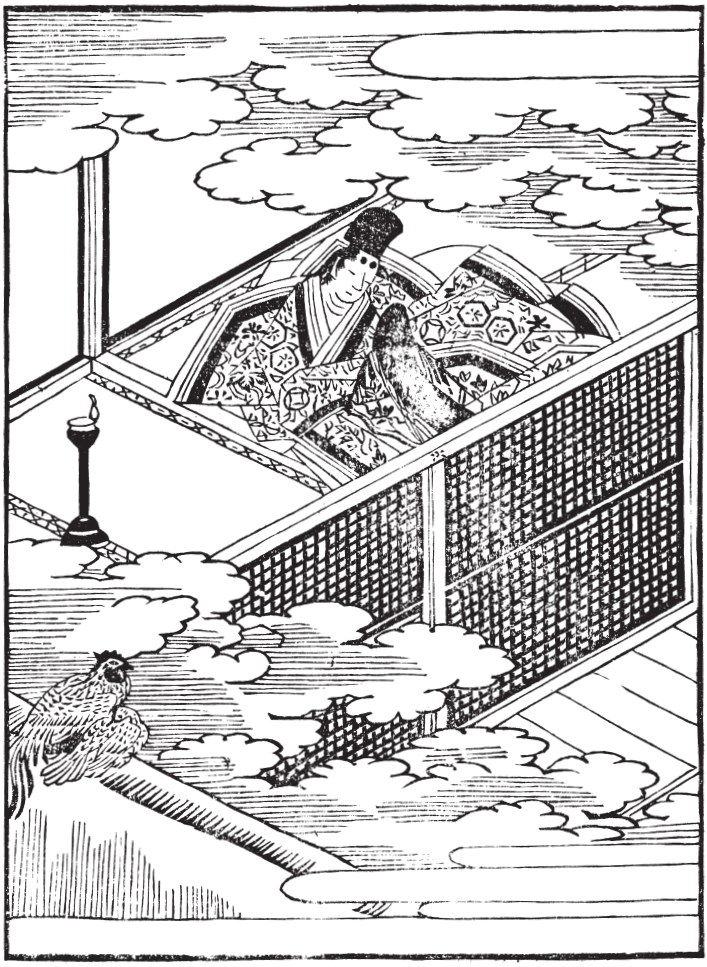
Nevertheless, both were leading their own lives now, and they drifted apart.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the man as Narihira, the woman as Ono no Komachi, and the "little thing" the mutual uncertainty of their feelings for each other. The standard reading of this episode is that the woman

52. Ibid., 879.
53. *ShGSS* 982, Narihira, "in response to the person who said, 'not, at least, seeds of forgetting-lily.'"
54. *SKKS* 1361.
55. Ibid., 1369.

leaves over a romantic misunderstanding. This reading is based on understanding the phrase *yo no naka* (lit., "within the world") to refer to the relationship between a man and a woman, as it sometimes does. However, as Takeoka points out, the phrase never has this meaning in the *Ise,* but in fact refers to a more general disappointment with life. Moreover, there are a number of poems about religiously renouncing the world, as well as a narrative account of just such a situation in the roughly contemporary *Takamitsu nikki.*[56] We have therefore translated this episode according to Takeoka's suggestion. Yūsai, on the other hand, claimed that the entire episode exemplifies the impatient nature of women, and he read it through "The Rainy Night Discussion" in *The Tale of Genji.* There, the Chief Equerry discusses cases in which a "woman may behave with comely modesty, . . . until something is too much for her after all, and off she goes to hide herself away in a mountain village or on a deserted stretch of shore, leaving behind a shattering letter, a heartrending poem, and a token to remember her by."[57] The only early commentary that has the man leave is the one by Ueda Akinari (1734–1809).

56. Mostow, *At the House of Gathered Leaves.*
57. Tyler, *The Tale of Genji,* pp. 25–26.



22

Back then a woman apparently never forgot her lover after a brief affair, because she sent him:

uki nagara
hito woba eshimo
wasureneba

You were awful, yes,
but, I also have to say,
unforgettable:

katsu uramitsutsu though at times I just hate you,
naho zo kohishiki[58] I still love you even so.

"I knew it!" he said to himself and replied:

ahi-mite ha Together, we two
kokoro hitotsu wo let our hearts flow into one
kaha-shima no till a river isle
midzu no nagarete split our stream, but those waters
taeji to zo omofu[59] will always run on, I know.

Still, he went to her that night. They talked over what had been and what might be, and he said:

aki no yo no Take of autumn nights
chiyo wo hitoyo ni a round thousand, all one night,
nazurahete of which eight thousand:
yachiyo shi nebaya I could lie with you that long
aku toki no aran and, believe me, still want more!

She answered:

aki no yo no Make those autumn nights,
chiyo wo hitoyo ni a round thousand, all one night,
naseri to mo and when it was done,
kotoba nokorite we would still be whispering
tori ya nakinan[60] while the cocks crowed in the dawn.

He went on visiting her more eagerly than before.

Almost all commentators understand the couple to have already had a brief affair. Takeoka is unique in seeing them as two would-be lovers who gave up before they could come together. Interpretations of the man's reaction to receiving the woman's poem range from self-satisfaction ("I knew it!") to

58. *SKKS* 1362.
59. *ShGSS* 833/837, Narihira, "topic unknown."
60. *ShKKS* 1165/1157, anon., "in response when Lord Narihira said, 'eight thousand nights I could lie with you.'"

sympathy ("I feel the same way"). Takeoka is again unique in seeing these words as part of the man's written reply to the woman.

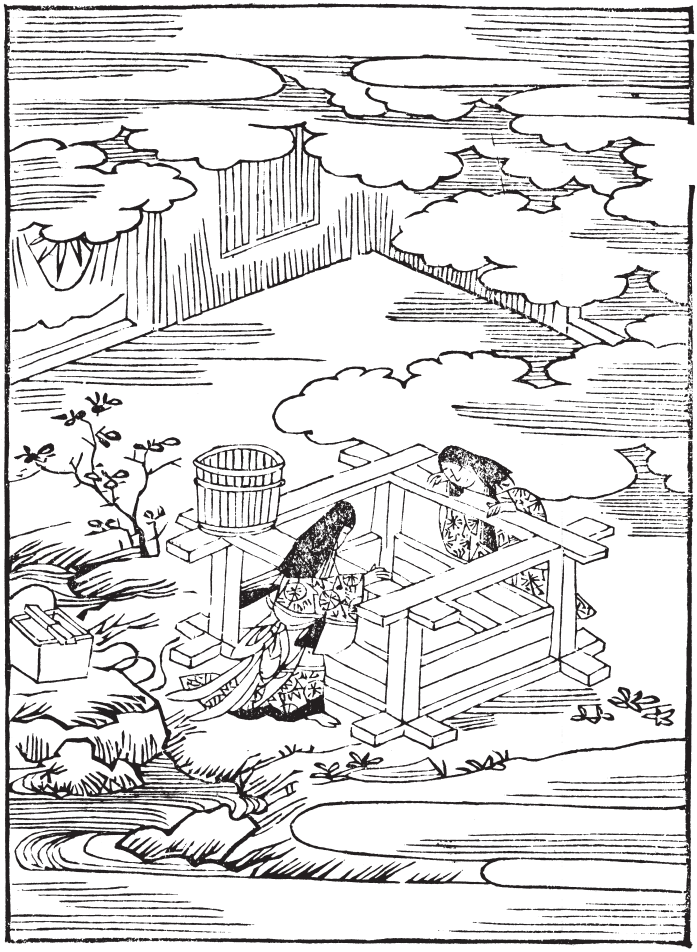
Some commentators read the man's first poem as *ahi-mite ha* (lit., "having met," Keichū) while others took it as a negative, *ahi-mide ha* ("not meeting," Takanao). According to McCullough: "The man, assured of the lady's remorse, feels able to pretend a certain coolness. The message in his poem is either, 'Though you have behaved badly, I won't cast you off; I'll come to see you one of these days,' or 'Perhaps it would be best not to meet for a while; I'll come around some day.'" [61]

Kokoro hitotsu wo / kaha-shima no involves a pun around "river island" *(kaha-shima)* and "to exchange *(kahasu)* hearts as one." All commentaries see an analogy between the unceasing flow of the river and unceasing love, and most see the parting and rejoining of the water around the island as a metaphor for the lovers coming back together.

"Still, he went to her that night" *(to ha ihikeredo)*—the concessive construction has long caused confusion. Teitoku wrote: "Although he did not say, 'Let's meet tonight,' . . . when he heard that the woman's feelings had not changed, he could no longer resist, and went to see her that very night." Vos takes the phrase to refer to the woman's previous poem: "Although she spoke in that way," though on what authority is not clear.

Finally, the last exchange of poems revolves around the pivot-word *aki/aku*. *Aki* is "autumn," traditionally thought to have the longest nights of the year; *aku* means "to tire of, to be satisfied." Even if a thousand long autumn nights were made into one, and the lovers slept together eight thousand of such nights, they would never tire of each other.

61. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 212.



23

Back then the son and daughter of two families out in the country played together beside the well. When they grew up, they became bashful with each other, but the young man wanted the girl for his own. The girl wanted him, too, and she ignored her parents' attempts to marry her to someone else. From next door the young man sent her:

tsudzuwitsu no Once upon a time
widzutsu ni kakeshi I would stand by our well-curb,
maro ga take measuring a height

suginikerashi na surely grown too tall for that,
imo mizaru ma ni love, since you and I last met.

She replied:

kurabe-koshi And the childish hair
furi-wake-gami mo I so often held to yours
kata suginu now falls past my shoulders.
kimi narazu shite Who could ever, if not you,
tare ka agubeki come and put it up for me?

They kept writing to each other like this till at last they had their wish.

The years passed, and the young woman lost her support when her father died. What's the good of staying on with her *now?* the man said to himself, and he began visiting a woman in Takayasu County of Kawachi

Province. His original wife, though, saw him off without ever reproaching him. Suspecting her of having a lover, he pretended to set off for Kawachi but hid instead in the nearby shrubbery to spy on her. She made herself up very prettily and, gazing sadly before her:

kaze fukeba	When the wild wind blows,
okitsu shira-nami	out upon the sea white waves
tatsuta yama	rise—Mount Tatsuta!
yoha ni ya kimi ga	can you, by night, truly mean
hitori koyuran[62]	to cross those hills all alone?

He was so moved that he gave up going to Kawachi.

62. *KKS* 994, anon., "topic unknown," with a long postscript resembling the *Ise* text.

When for once he did visit Takayasu, he noticed that that woman's originally flawless manners had become so casual that she now took the rice paddle herself to heap her bowl full. This put him off, and he stopped going for good. That explains why she kept gazing off toward Yamato:

kimi ga atari
mitsutsu wo woran
ikoma yama
kumo na kakushi so
ame ha furu to mo[63]

I shall spend my time
gazing toward where you are.
The Ikoma hills:
clouds, do not hide them from me,
not even on days of rain!

She went on looking out that way until at last he, in Yamato, let her know that he would be coming. She awaited him joyfully, but time after time he failed to appear. She sent him:

kimi komu to
ihishi yogoto ni
suginureba
tanomanu mono no
kohitsutsu zo furu[64]

Every night you said
this time you would be coming
has gone by in vain,
and I do not expect you,
but I long for you always.

He never came back.

"Families out in the country" renders *winaka-watarahi shikeru hito,* literally, "men who traveled about the countryside," that is, itinerant peddlers of some kind. Traditional commentators started from the presumption that the boy and girl were Narihira—the grandson of an emperor—and Ki no Aritsune's Daughter. The Reizei school placed the action in the village of Kasuga in Nara (see Episode 1) and insisted that both Narihira's father, Prince Abo, and Aritsune owned land there.[65] Other commentators took the phrase to refer to Aritsune's posting as the Governor of Sanuki Province. Attempting to salvage Narihira's reputation, Yūsai suggested that Narihira looks elsewhere for support to save strain on Aritsune's straitened circumstances (see Episode 16).

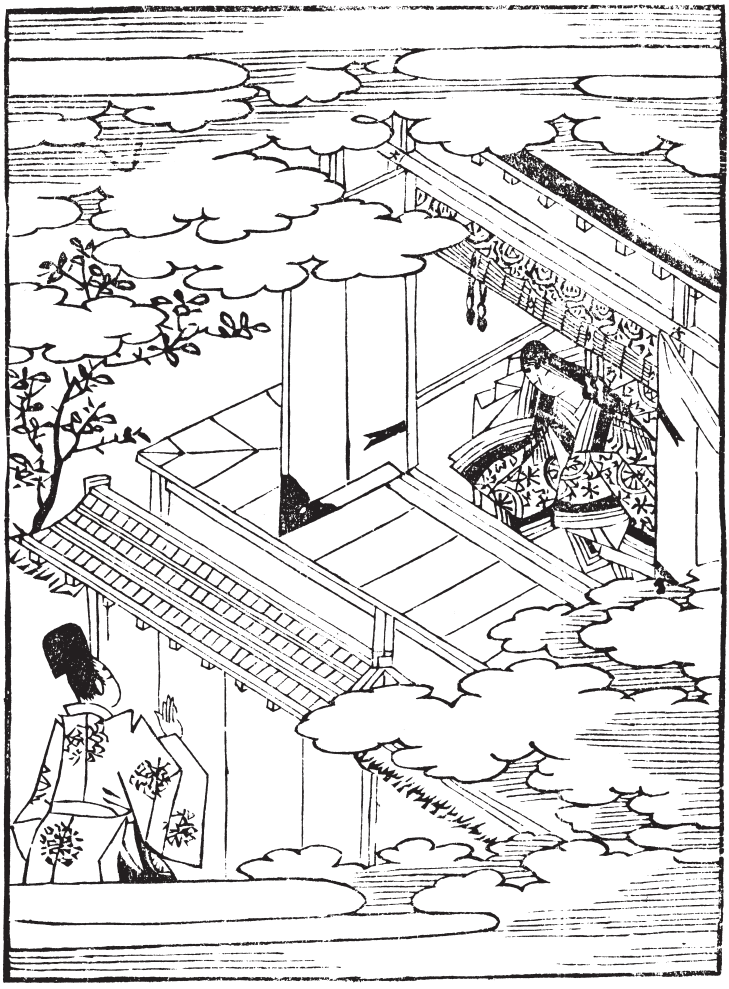
63. *MYS* 3032; *SKKS* 1368, anon.
64. *SKKS* 1207, anon., "topic unknown."
65. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 260.

In the Heian period, it was common for a young wife to stay in her parents' house and be visited by her husband, in what is known as an uxorilocal marriage. Even if the young couple lived by themselves, the young man would rely on his father-in-law for both career assistance and maintenance. With the girl's father dead, the young man takes up with another, wealthier, woman. The polygynous customs of the time allowed him to be married to both women.

The woman's second poem employs a "preface" *(jo)* and treats *tatsu* (to rise) as a pivot-word *(kake-kotoba)* with the place-name Mount Tatsuta. The first half of the poem then reads: "When the wind blows, the white waves of the offing rise," and the second—the true import of her poem—"Mount Tatsuta: are you crossing it alone at night?" The two halves of the poem need have no semantic connection, but early on commentators insisted that *shira-nami* (white waves) was a term for robbers. In its note to this poem, the *Kokinshū* has the woman playing the *koto,* which is often included in illustrations. In the version of this tale included in the *Yamato monogatari,* the woman eventually goes to bed, and the man sees her hold a basin of water to her breast; the heat of her jealousy makes the water boil.

In contrast to the Yamato woman, who makes herself up and composes a poem of concern for her errant husband, the Takayasu woman has let herself go. The *Yamato monogatari* version describes her as "wearing an extremely shabby robe and . . . her hair was held in place at her forehead with a large comb"[66]—the Heian equivalent of curlers. Traditional readings took the phrase *keko no utsuha-mono* to be "the rice-bowls of the servants," and illustrations often show the woman dishing rice up for young servants (Takeoka seems unique among modern commentators in adopting this interpretation). With such an interpretation, the difference between the two women becomes that between a woman who can do nothing more than languish for her husband and one who is an efficient household manager.

66. Tahara, *Tales of Yamato,* p. 103.



24

Back then this man was living in the distant countryside. With great regret he then left his wife behind to enter service in the Capital, and when he did not come back for three years, she tired of waiting for him. Another man persisted in courting her, and she promised to be his that night. Then her husband arrived. "Open the door!" he called as he knocked, but she did not. Instead she sent out this:

aratama no Each with fresh promise,
toshi no mitose wo three long years came in, then passed
machi-wabite while I waited still,
tada koyohi koso until finally, today,
niimakura sure[67] I am taking someone new.

He answered:

adzusa-yumi While the moon's drawn bow
ma-yumi tsuki-yumi sped the months past one by one
toshi wo hete to make all those years,
waga seshi ga goto I was very good to you:
uruhashimi seyo be then just as good to him.

He was about to leave again when she:

adzusa-yumi Let the moon's drawn bow
hikedo hikanedo speed or not the months that pass,
mukashi yori from the beginning
kokoro ha kimi ni every leaning of my heart
yorinishi mono wo has brought me to you alone.

Nonetheless, he left. Heartbroken, she started out after him, but she never caught up, and at last she collapsed beside a spring. She wrote on a stone there, with blood from her finger:

ahi-omohade He did not love me,
karenuru hito wo and now he has gone away:
todomekane I could not stop him,
waga mi ha ima zo and for me the time has come
kie-hatenumeru to disappear from this life.

With that she breathed her last.

This episode has traditionally been read as a continuation of the previous one, with the man as Narihira and the woman as Aritsune's Daughter. As

67. *ShKKS* 1218/1210, anon., "topic unknown."

early as the *Isei shō* (before 1537) commentators were quoting the Taihō Code (702) to the effect that a woman with no children could divorce if her husband was away for three years.

The crux of interpretive difference is in the man's poem. Literally, it lists three kinds of bows: catalpa bows *(adzusa-yumi),* spindle-tree bows *(ma-yumi),* and zelkova bows *(tsuki-yumi).* These serve as a kind of "preface" *(jo-kotoba)* to "year" *(toshi),* with *tsuki* also meaning "months," and thus "the months and years pass." The technique here is believed to derive from a *kagura* poem:

yumi to iheba	When one speaks of bows,
shina naki mono wo	although there seem no differences—
adzusa-yumi	catalpa bows,
ma-yumi tsuki-yumi	spindle-tree bows, zelkova bows—
shina-jina zo arikere	there are in fact many sorts!

But disagreements center on the second half of the poem: is he telling her to keep her old promise to him (Yūsai), or to love her new husband as sincerely as her former husband loved her? While the latter is now the commonly accepted interpretation, scholars still disagree over their assessments of the man and the woman. For Katagiri, as in the previous episode, the story is about a man's fickle affections and "wildness" *(honpōsa)* on one hand, and the true and unchanging love of his wife on the other. For Takeoka, it is the man who is the ideal, so loving his wife that he cedes the field to his competition and sincerely wishes the new couple the very best. Indeed, Takeoka sees the woman as the one with shallow and changeable feelings.

The woman's second poem more literally reads: "Whether the catalpa bow is drawn or not, from *(yori)* long ago, my heart has been drawn *(yori-nishi)* to you." Yūsai claimed this poem was an allusion to another poem by Harumichi no Tsuraki, *Kokinshū* 610:

adzusa-yumi	When I pull the string
hikeba moto-suwe	my catalpa bow, both ends
waga kata ni	towards me are drawn *(yoru),*
yoru koso masare	as at night *(yoru)* it swells—
kohi no kokoro ha	my heart full of love for you.

There was also debate whether the woman actually died, and which finger she used to write her poem. *Itadzura ni narinikeri* literally means "to come to naught," but was an idiom used to mean "to die." However, as early as the *Shōmon shō,* there was an insistence that the woman did not actually expire. Perhaps for this reason the *Isei shō* claimed that the woman used

her little finger to inscribe her sanguineous verse. Katagiri, on the contrary, imagines her falling down several times as she pursues her husband, so that she writes with an index finger bloodied in her falls. The former image became popular in *ukiyo-e,* where it was associated with the practice of courtesans and lovers cutting off the tip of their little finger to demonstrate their sincerity, much like modern *yakuza*.[68]

68. See Mostow, "Court Classics," pp. 36–51.

25

Back then there was this man. When a woman who'd never said she wouldn't receive him nonetheless refused to do so, he sent her:

aki no no ni
sasa wakeshi asa no
sode yori mo
ahade nuru yo zo
hichi-masarikeru[69]

More than morning sleeves
brushed homeward through bamboo grass
thick on autumn moors,
mine drip with ceaseless tears
shed through a night without you.

The wanton replied:

mirume naki
waga mi wo ura to
shiranebaya
karenade ama no
ashi tayuku kuru[70]

That this shore of mine
offers no seaweed pleasures
you seem not to know,
you, fisherman, who insist
on dragging your steps my way.

The first poem appears as *Kokinshū* 622, attributed to Narihira, while the second poem appears as 623, attributed to Ono no Komachi. There is no headnote for either poem. While these two verses have no relationship to each other, the *Ise* author has turned them into a romantic exchange.

Although Narihira and Komachi were near contemporaries, there is no record of them interacting. However, because of this *Ise* episode, stories about their love affair became popular in the medieval period. In fact, the episode moved the Reizei school commentators to identify all "wanton" *(iro-gonomi)* women in the *Ise* as Komachi (Episodes 28, 37, and 42). Moreover, as Susan Klein writes: "Since episode 28 tells of a passionate woman who suddenly leaves her husband or lover, women in other episodes in the same kind of situation are also identified as Ono no Komachi (Episodes 21, 60, 62, and 113). And since Episodes 37 and 42 characterize the woman as shallow and untrustworthy, women so characterized in other episodes are also Ono no Komachi (Episodes 18 and 50)."[71]

69. *KKS* 622, Narihira.
70. *KKS* 623, Ono no Komachi.
71. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 73.

The woman's poem puns on *mirume,* which means both a kind of seaweed and "chance to meet." *Ura* means "bay" or "shore" and also suggests *u,* "sorrow," and *urami,* "resentment." Debate centers around the referent for *waga mi wo ura[mi]* (resenting oneself)—does it refer to the man or the woman? The former is the interpretation of Kanera: "'Oneself' is said of the man. Since he does not feel reproachful toward the woman, having had no occasion to meet her, he visits incessantly, and she composes. . . ." Most modern commentators take it as a reference to the woman herself, meaning either (a) she is unremarkable *(mi-dokoro mo naki),* (b) that there is no chance to see her (i.e., seeing no pun in *ura*), or (c) that she has no desire to see him.

26

Back then this man failed to win a woman who lived in the neighborhood of Fifth Avenue, and he replied to someone who had written in answer to his complaint:

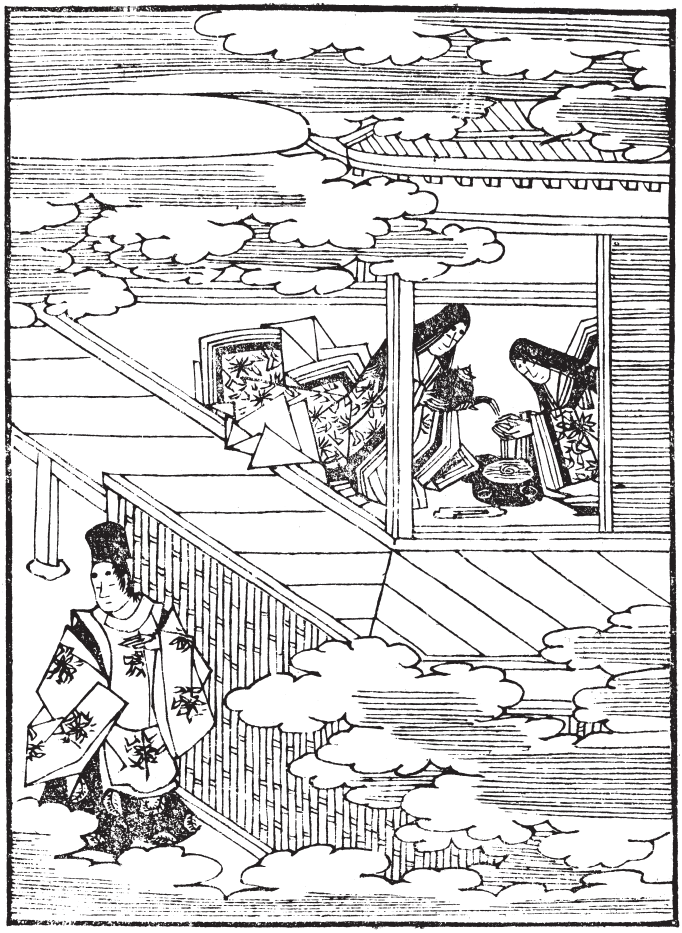
omohoezu	Never did I think
sode ni minato no	my sleeves' harbor could so seethe
sawagu kana	with clamorous waves
morokoshi-bune no	just because a mighty ship
yorishi bakari ni[72]	sailed in from far-off Cathay.

This episode has long posed interpretive problems, but it was generally taken to refer back to Episode 4, with the unattained woman being the Nijō Empress, Takaiko. *Wabitarikeru* can be read as modifying *hito* ("someone who had commiserated with him"), or not ("in answer to someone, when he was lamenting the fact that he had failed to win the woman who lived in the neighborhood of Fifth Avenue"). The former is the traditional interpretation, which then leads to an easy association of this person with the Somedono Empress Meishi, who was identified as the "guardian" that helped Narihira meet with Takaiko in Episode 5. Other commentators (e.g., Yūsai, quoting his teacher, Saneki) insisted that it was not the empress, but simply someone who had guided the man along the road to and from Fifth Avenue, that is, the romantic go-between—presumably a lady-in-waiting to Takaiko.

Sode ni minato, or "a harbor in my sleeves" suggests that the man has cried so long that his tears have formed a harbor in his sleeves. Similar expressions, such as "an ocean under my pillow," occur in other poems of the period.

Morokoshi-bune, or a "Cathay ship," suggests a large and grand vessel. Japan had little in the way of a merchant navy at this time and relied heavily on Chinese ships and sailors to travel to and from the continent. Thus it would take a large, foreign vessel to cause seething waves big enough for the man to compare to his tears.

72. *SKKS* 1357, anon.



27

Back then this man visited a woman for a night but never came back. The woman took the slatted cover off her washbasin, saw her reflection in the water, and said to herself:

ware bakari
mono omofu hito ha
mata mo araji
to omoheba midzu no
shita ni mo arikeri

No one, anywhere,
could be as miserable
as unhappy me,
I assure myself, yet spy,
beneath the water, one more.

The man who hadn't come was standing nearby. He replied:

minakuchi ni	I must be the one
ware ya miruran	you have glimpsed there by the spout,
kahadzu sahe	for even a frog
midzu no shita nite	may, from beneath the water,
morokowe ni naku	join in when another cries.

Heian matrimonial customs required the man to visit the woman, supposedly secretly and returning home before dawn, for three consecutive nights in order to establish a formal marriage. While the secrecy supported the pretense that the couple was marrying freely and unbeknownst to their parents, in fact first marriages were usually arranged by the parents, for largely practical purposes. On the morning after the Third Night the man would stay for breakfast—the *tokoro-arawashi,* or *divulgation d'un fait accompli,* as the French have it. If he did not return for all three nights, he was understood to be dissatisfied with his prospective mate, and the marriage was off. In some variant versions of this episode the girl's parents are said to be angry, reinforcing the sense of her being caught in the middle of an unsuccessful politically arranged marriage.

The typical reading of this episode sees the man's poem as, in McCullough's words, "a polite reassurance."[73] Takeoka challenges this view:

> Due to his repeating the words of the woman's poem, "I" and "beneath the water," a feeling of him making fun of her comes through. It is a cruel poem that very much mocks the woman. Probably to the man she seemed like an ugly woman who made him think of a frog . . . these two poems are not exchanged, they are two separate soliloquies. (p. 580)

In fact, the Hiromoto line of texts does not have the man "overhearing" the woman's poem, but simply hearing of it, presumably at some later date. Such an interpretation would be more in accord with the rather ruthless sense of "courtliness" *(miyabi)* the *Ise* embodies and bring this episode in line with others such as 14 and 15.[74]

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73. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 215.
74. See Mostow, "Female Readers."

28

Back then a passionate woman left her husband. He sent her:

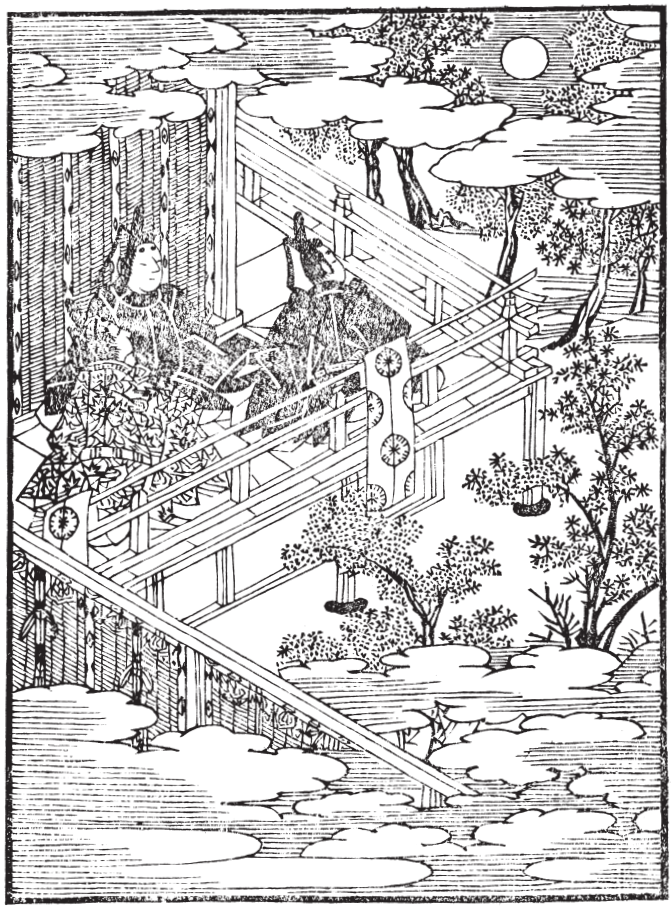
nadote kaku
afugo katami ni
nariniken
midzu morasaji to
musubishi mono wo

Why must suddenly
the balance pole we shouldered
tip, and we two part,
who joined to draw one water
and spill none from either pail?

Commentators as late as Kanera identified the "passionate woman" *(irogonomi narikeru wonna)* as Ono no Komachi, but Shōhaku specifically rejected this interpretation.

The poem is a mass of puns: *afugo,* pronounced *ōgo,* is a carrying-pole; as *afu go* it means "chance to meet." *Katami* means "difficult" and is a kind of bamboo basket; finally, *musubu* means both "to pledge to each other" and "to scoop with both hands," as well as, according to some commentators, relating to the making of the bamboo basket ("to tie").

Takeoka points out that the word *nadote* appears only in direct speech in such works as *The Tale of Genji,* suggesting it is colloquial diction. Combined with the use of common household objects such as baskets and carrying-poles as metaphors, Watanabe Minoru suggests that the poem probably originally concerned a housewife who had suddenly left her husband.



29

Back then, when called to attend the cherry-blossom jubilee held at the residence of the Heir Apparent's mother:

hana ni akanu
nageki ha itsu mo
seshikadomo
kefu no koyohi ni
niru toki ha nashi[75]

I had always known
what sadness it means to love
blossoms such as these,
but the evening of this day
resembles no other time.

75. *SKKS* 105, Narihira.

The traditional reading is to see the author of the poem as Narihira and the Heir Apparent's mother as Takaiko. Teika's interlinear notes *(kanbutsu)* in the *Tenpuku-bon* read: "Jōgan 12 [870], Second Month, Imperial Prince Sada'akira [the future Emperor Yōzei] was made Heir Apparent. At that time, Takaiko was made a *nyōgo* and titled Mother of the Heir Apparent. He had been born on the twenty-sixth day of the second month of the previous year, when Takaiko was 27."

"Cherry-blossom jubilee" *(hana no ga)* is a flower-viewing party. In the Heian period, such parties were often held as a kind of birthday party marking decades, starting with the person's fortieth year. The term *ohomu-kata* (residence) has caused confusion, as the word can mean either a residence or a person. One common reading was to assert that the cherry-blossom jubilee was for the birthday of Takaiko's cousin, the Somedono Empress Meishi (see Episode 5). However, as McCullough (following Arai) points out, Meishi's fortieth birthday celebration would have taken place in 868, before Sada'akira was named Heir Apparent.

At any rate, the poem was traditionally understood to be not only a suitable congratulatory poem, but also to hint at Narihira's lingering attachment to Takaiko. Modern interpretations reject this reading, as well as the connection with Meishi, and take the poem simply as a well-constructed laudatory verse appropriate to a brilliant occasion.

30

Back then this man sent a woman who never allowed him to get very far:

afu koto ha	Our time together
tama no wo bakari	shrinks in mind to the slight gap
omohoete	between threaded beads—
tsuraki kokoro no	why does your indifference
nagaku miyura[76]	seem then to stretch on and on?

As Takeoka notes, most commentators simply see a contrast between the shortness referred to in the upper half of the verse and the length referred to in the lower half: "our meetings are short—why does your indifference have to be so long?" However, Kanera recognized that the point of the poem lies in the comparison to the string of a necklace: viewed as the space between the individual beads, it is short; viewed as the full length of the necklace, it is long.

76. *SCSS* 951/949.

31

Back then this man was passing a gentlewoman's room at the Palace when some sort of ill-feeling toward him moved her to remark, "Go on then, you lily-leaf, let's just see how *you* get on!" He replied:

tsumi mo naki
hito wo ukeheba
wasure-gusa
wono ga uhe ni zo
ofu to ifu naru

Cast an evil spell
upon blameless innocence,
and, so we are told,
leaves of forgetting-lily
will quickly overgrow you.

That really annoyed some of the women who overheard it.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the palace as that of the future Emperor Seiwa, then still Heir Apparent. The gentlewoman was identified as Lady Ise (Ise no Go), who, the commentary claimed, served Emperor Kōkō in her youth. (Chronologically, this is impossible.)

The woman's words fall into a 7–7 syllable pattern, so some commentators assumed that they must be the lower hemistich of a poem. Yūsai's teacher, Saneki, insisted it was a quotation, but he admitted to not yet having identified the source. Kigin claimed that Sanetaka had cited the following poem from the *Shoku Nihongi* (c. 797), attributed to Mushimaru:

wasure-yuku
tsurasa ha ika ni
inochi araba
yoshi ya kusa-ba yo
naran saga min

Whatever may happen
to the bitterness I'm coming to forget—
if I live long enough,
well, then, lily-leaf,
let's just see how *you* get on!

Unfortunately, the poem does not in fact appear in the *Shoku Nihongi,* and the *Shoku Man'yōshū,* a collection that was also sometimes identified as the source, is no longer extant.

As early as the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō,* the man's poem was believed to be based on a passage from the "Fumonbon" (Chapter on the Universal Gate) of the *Lotus Sutra:*

> When either by spells, or by curses, or by various
> poisonous herbs,

Someone wishes to harm his body, the victim,
By virtue of his constant mindfulness of Kannon,
Shall send them back to plague their authors.[77]

The final comment too has been interpreted variously. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* took the subject to be the Nijō Empress Takaiko, jealous about the exchange between Narihira and Lady Ise. By Yūsai's time the phrase was understood as an insight into the nature of women in general: "Thinking that there must be something behind this exchange, some women were jealous. Truly, this is the way women are!"

77. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom,* p. 317, with minor emendations.

32

Back then he sent this some years later to a woman he had known:

inishihe no	As in times gone by
shitsu no wotamaki	the weaver of hempen cloth
kuri-kaheshi	unwound her hand skein,
mukashi wo ima ni	ah, that we might find a way
nasu yoshi mogana	to turn those days back to now!

However, she apparently ignored him.

The point of the poem lies in the pivot-word *kuri-kaheshi,* which can mean both "to (un)wind" and "to repeat" (in our translation, "turn back"). The final comment is a supposition on the part of the narrator (traditionally identified as Lady Ise), since the woman sent no reply poem. Commentators such as Yūsai were troubled by the "poetic ill" *(uta no yamahi)* of including in the poem two words with essentially the same meaning (*inishihe* and *mukashi,* both of which mean "the past"), but explained it away as antique style.

33

Back then this man was seeing a woman in Mubara county of Settsu Province. On one of his visits she seemed afraid that, once gone, he might never come back. He gave her:

ashibe yori
michikuru shiho no
iyamashi ni
kimi ni kokoro wo
omohimasu kana

Swells the surging tide
hither, onward through the reeds,
and just so in me
leaps the ardor of a heart
ever eager to be yours.

She replied:

komorie ni
omofu kokoro wo
ikade ka ha
fune sasu sawo no
sashite shirubeki[78]

What that heart of yours
harbors in its hidden cove—
how, I ask you, how
could a boatman's probing pole
hit upon the truth of that?

Not too bad, perhaps, for a country girl.

This episode has aroused little comment over time, the chief question seeming to be whether Narihira owned property in Mubara. Commentators also noted that the man's poem is very similar to one collected as *Man'yōshū* 620.

Takeoka, in his rather literal fashion, imagines these poems exchanged while the man was actually poling himself away on the morning tide. Moreover, following Orikuchi Shinobu, he claims that there is no example of expressions such as "hidden cove" *(komorie)* used to refer to another's feelings—they are always used in reference to the speaker's own feelings. Accordingly, Orikuchi Shinobu paraphrases the woman's poem as: "Deep like a hidden inlet is my loving heart—how could you possibly plumb its depths with the likes of the pole you thrust to move your boat along?"[79]

78. *ShGSS* 686/698, anon., "in reply to 'a heart ever eager to be yours' from Narihira."

79. Orikuchi, *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū,* vol. 13, p. 200.

The final question by the narrator asks literally, "Is it good? Is it bad?" *(yoshi ya, ashi ya)*—Abe Toshiko suggests *yoshi* is supposed to be also taken as the Western Japanese pronunciation of "reeds" *(ashi)*. Takeoka notes, however, that the earliest evidence for this pronunciation is from the twelfth century. At any rate, *ashi* (bad) clearly echoes *ashi* (reeds), suggesting, perhaps, the narrator's true assessment of the country girl's poetic effort.

Ueda Akinari used the phrase *yoshi ya ashi ya* for the title of his commentary on the *Ise*.

34

Back then this man sent a woman who had given him no encouragement:

iheba eni	Would I speak, I fail;
ihaneba mune ni	keep silent, and in my breast
sawagarete	tumult quickly reigns—
kokoro hitotsu ni	ah, to this poor heart of mine
nageku koro kana[80]	these days bring nothing but grief!

He seems to have put his feelings ever so plainly.

The two issues surrounding this episode are the meaning of the final, editorial comment *(omo nakute iheru naru-beshi)* and the point of the episode as a whole.

Omo nakute was taken by most early commentators to mean someone feeling ashamed of their own actions, yielding, as in McCullough's translation, "He had, it would seem, lost all sense of shame." However, while the phrase had this meaning in the ancient period, according to *Kokugo daijiten* (an authoritative dictionary of the Japanese language), the perspective had changed by the time of the *Ise* from the first person to the third, so that the phrase now represented a third party's assessment of someone else's actions. It therefore came to mean "brazen" or "impudent."

This still leaves one wondering about the point of the episode. Uesaka Nobuo suggests that the problem is the difference in social status between a lower-ranking man and a higher-ranking woman, which explains why she gives him "no encouragement." Takeoka, on the other hand, draws attention to the expression *kokoro hitotsu ni* (more literally, "in my heart alone"), suggesting that until this poem, the man had not actually communicated his feelings to the woman, making the episode a mildly comic one about a timid man rashly declaring his love.

80. *SCSS* 637/635, Narihira, "sent to a woman."

35

Back then he sent a woman he was sorry not to be seeing any more:

tama no wo wo	On a single string
ahawo ni yorite	your spirit and mine are strung:
musubereba	one so softly spun,
taete no nochi mo	parted we can still, I know,
ahamu to zo omofu[81]	mend the break and join again.

The problem in this episode concerns what *ahawo* is. While no explanation is entirely satisfactory, our translation is based on the notion of a plied cord (two or three ply), of which the single threads ("singles") were given minimal twist to begin with, in the spinning, so that when plied together they produced a more bulky, softer yarn (cord) than usual, hence one correspondingly more likely to part under tension. As for "mend the break," perhaps some sort of splicing is involved. One imagines merging the gently frayed (because of the light twist) rather than sharply broken ends of the singles together over a few inches, then giving the cord a tighter twist that would seal the join and make the cord whole again.

Traditional explanations included (a) a knot gently tied; (b) one tied with space between the threads; (c) one tied so that it is difficult to undo; (d) a kind of slipknot; and (e) one tied like an *awaji-* or *awabi*-knot. Most modern commentators agree that the *awa/aha* means "bubbles" or "foam," but then the question is how this is related to strings or knots. Foam bursts *(taete)* easily, so such a knot must be easily undone. But why should one be assured that the ends of such a knot will meet again? Perhaps some more complicated design is envisioned, such as what is known as an "abalone *(awabi)* knot" (see Diagram 2).

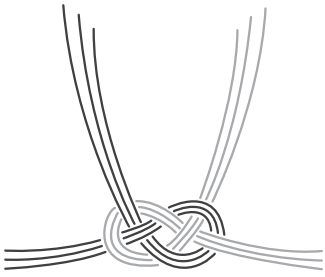


Diagram 2: An Abalone (awabi) *Knot*

81. *SCSS* 950.

36

Back then this woman complained, "You seem to have forgotten me"; to which he:

tani sebami	So cramped the ravine,
mine made haheru	skyward to the summit climbs
tama-kadzura	the green, supple vine
taemu to hito ni	unbroken; nor would I break
waga omohanaku ni[82]	the tendril tie between us.

This poem was recognized to be a slight reworking of *Man'yōshū* 3528/3507. Accordingly, the context provided was understood to be fictional and the episode as a whole to be a "made-up tale" *(tsukuri-monogatari)*. The man's reply ends on a concessive construction: "Although breaking with you is not what I was considering . . . (you accuse me of such thoughts anyway)."

82. *ShGSIS* 905/913, anon.

37

Back then this man was spending time with a passionate woman. He must have had his doubts about her, because he gave her:

ware narade Loose your trouser cord,
shita-himo toku na my sweet, for none but me,
asagaho no though I know full well
yufukage matanu you are a morning glory
hana ni ha ari to mo[83] gone before the evening comes.

She answered:

futari shite Together we two
musubishi himo wo reknotted my trouser cord,
hitori shite and I promise you
ahi-miru made ha till I am with you again
tokaji to zo omofu not to loose it on my own.

As in the following poem from the *Kokin rokujō* (455), there was an association between flower buds opening and a woman untying her trouser cord:

fushite omohi Lying down, brooding;
okite nagamuru rising and gazing out
harusame ni at the spring rains—
hana no shita-himo how must the buds of the flowers
ika ni tokuran be loosening their petals?

In the *Ise* episode, the man is leaving the woman in the morning after a night of lovemaking and compares her to the morning glories in bloom in her garden, enjoining her not to open her petals for any other man.

83. *SCSS* 823/821, Narihira.

38

Back then he went to see Ki no Aritsune, but Aritsune was off somewhere and took so long to come back that, when he did, he gave Aritsune this:

kimi ni yori
omohinarahinu
yo no naka no
hito ha kore wo ya
kohi to ifuramu[84]

Thanks to you, my friend,
I now know what they all mean:
this, obviously,
must be what out in the world
people keep calling "desire."

Aritsune replied:

narahaneba
yo no hito goto ni
nani wo kamo
kohi to ha ifu to
tohishi ware shi mo

Being ignorant,
I keep asking everyone
what in all the world
they mean when they say "desire"—
and now you've found out from *me?*

Keichū seems to have been the first to understand the headnote to mean that Narihira sent his poem to Aritsune. Later commentators also read the sentence to mean that Narihira sent his poem after returning to his own house. But it seems best to understand the poem as composed and given to Aritsune in person on his arrival.

Such seemingly romantic poems between men are found in Chinese sources such as the *Wen xuan* and also appear in the *Kokinshū* (e.g., 969, 399, 978–979). Azumamaro's is the only commentary that attempts to read this episode in a hetero-normative fashion by insisting that the poems are exchanged between Aritsune and his wife. In the seventeenth century, Kigin compiled an anthology of pederastic love poems, which he entitled *Iwatsutsuji* (Wild Azaleas) after the following *Kokinshū* poem:

omohi-idzuru
tokiwa no yama no
ihatsutsuji

Memories of love revive,
like wild azaleas bursting into bloom
on mountains of evergreen;

84. *ShKKS* 952/944 (Love I), Narihira, "topic unknown."

ihaneba koso are my stony silence only shows
kohishiki mono wo how much I love you.[85]

Kigin cites a *Kokinshū* commentary by Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) that says that this poem was composed by a priest and sent to Narihira. However, in his preface to *Iwatsutsuji* Kigin insists that "there is much talk of sex and love" in the *Ise* and *Genji,* "but none of this sort."[86] Nor does his anthology contain any other poems from the *Kokinshū* or any by or to Narihira.

85. Schalow, "Invention of a Literary Tradition."
86. Ibid., p. 10.

39

Back then there lived an Emperor known as His Majesty of Saiin. This Emperor had a daughter named Takaiko. Takaiko died, and on the night of her funeral the man from next door rode with a woman in her carriage to see the funeral cortège. A long time passed, but no cortège came forth. Having shed his tears, this man was about to give up when one Minamoto no Itaru, the greatest lover in all the land, who was present there for the same reason, noted that the carriage the man was in was a woman's. He approached it and began to play the gallant, then caught a firefly and tossed it inside. Fearing that the firefly would reveal a glimpse of the woman with him, the man moved to extinguish its light and spoke this poem:

idete inaba Once she has come forth,
kagiri narubemi there will be no more to see
tomoshi kechi for the light is gone,
toshi henuru ka to and no long years ago for them:
naku kowe kike listen to their mourning cries.

Itaru replied:

ito ahare It is sad indeed,
naku zo kikoyuru and, yes, I hear their cries
tomoshi kechi now the light is gone
kiyuru mono to mo I cannot help wondering
ware ha shirazu na whether it is really out.

For the greatest rake in all the land this was rather a feeble effort. Itaru was Shitagō's grandfather. His poem had nothing to do with the Princess.

Takaiko, or Sōshi (not to be confused with the Nijō Empress), was a daughter of Emperor Seiwa, and she died at the age of nineteen.

The interpretation of this episode has long been vexed. The point of the first man's poem is obviously a comparison of the extinguishing of the princess's life with the extinguishing of the light of the firefly (the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the man as Narihira and the woman with him as Aritsune's Daughter). The *Isei shō* seems to have been the first to see

a specific allusion to a line from the *Lotus Sutra:* "The Buddha that night crossed to extinction / Like firewood utterly consumed by fire." [87]

But the line *toshi henuru ka* (lit., "have many years passed?") has proven difficult. The traditional interpretation is that it is a rhetorical question: "Did the princess live many years? No, she died young." Recent scholarship, however, has focused on the connection to the long time passed waiting for the cortège to emerge from the mansion's gate (Takeoka appears to see a pun in *ka to* and *kado,* or "gate"). According to this reading, the mourners are so wracked with grief that it seems they have been mourning for years since the princess died. Our translation interprets the line differently again, suggesting that, for the mourners, their adored "buddha" (the princess) died not long years ago, like Shakyamuni, but just recently. (The use of the word *hotoke,* "buddha," as a pet-name in Heian Japanese allows this interpretation.) Finally, Itaru's verse was also seen to be based on a line from the *Lotus Sutra:* "Though I preach nirvana / This is no true extinction." [88]

87. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom,* p. 19.
88. Ibid., p. 37.

40

Back then this young man was in love with a not at all bad-looking girl. His disapproving parents were afraid he might fall for her and meant to send her away, but so far they hadn't actually done it. Being under their thumb, he had no will of his own yet and no power to stop them. The girl herself ranked too low to resist. Meanwhile, his passion for her only grew. Suddenly, his parents dismissed her. He shed tears of blood, but there was nothing he could do about it. She was taken away. Weeping, he wrote:

idete inaba Would anyone mind,
tare ka wakare no really, if she were leaving
katakaran of her own free will?
arishi ni masaru But ah, the pain I feel today
kefu ha kanashi mo passes all I knew before!

Then he fainted. His parents panicked. They had acted for his own good, never imagining that he felt *that* strongly about her. Now he was out cold, and in great agitation they prayed for him as hard as they could. He lost consciousness at sunset and didn't finally regain it until very late the next day, at the hour of the dog. That's the way young people used to love, back then. Our good old boys these days would never be up to it.

At the beginning of the episode, the girl is described as *keshiu ha aranu*. Modern commentators take this as "not bad," while traditional commentators interpreted it to mean "not vulgar, not a commoner." However, later in the text she is specifically identified as *iyashi,* "of low rank" or "common." Scholars such as Yūsai explained away the apparent contradiction by claiming that "low rank" here simply indicated youth.

Again, while the standard contemporary interpretation is that the girl is a servant in the boy's house, traditional commentaries see the boy (Narihira) visiting the girl at her parents' house. In other words, the parents are those of the girl, not the boy.

In one of the variant textual lines of the *Ise,* the girl sends a poem to the boy through the servant who had escorted her away:

idzuko made If anyone asks
okuri ha shitsu to how far away
hito tohaba I have been sent,

akanu wakare no	tell him as far as the River of Tears
namida-gaha made	shed due to parting so unsatisfied.

This poem was incorporated into the tale "Lampblack" (Haizumi) in the late-Heian collection of tales *The Riverside Counselor's Stories (Tsutsumi Chūnagon monogatari),*[89] demonstrating that other forms of the *Ise* circulated throughout the premodern period.

The real puzzle, however, is the last line, contrasting "young men back then" *(mukashi no waka-hito)* with "the old men of today" *(ima no okina)*. Katagiri has pointed out that there is no basis for comparison here: one could compare young men of the present and past, or old men of the present and past, but here we have no common term. Takeoka insists that the line simply expresses a typical nostalgia for "the good old days" and, uncharacteristically for him, argues that one should not examine the statement too logically. But his reading relies on its own peculiar logic: "In the past, even such young and inexperienced young men had such pure love—all the more so when they were old men was their love pure and persistent. But can the old men of today be so persistent? No, today even the old, and even more so the young, are slackers." This reading seems based on the somewhat surprising supposition that the *Ise* author thinks that old men are more pure and passionate in their love than young men. Katagiri, citing the *Waka chiken shū* and Orikuchi Shinobu for support, argues that the sentence is supposed to be read as a statement from the protagonist-author, reflecting on the now-lost passion of his youth. In this case, it might make sense to take *okina* in the singular, identifying it with the other appearances of the term where it points to Narihira himself: "That's the way young people used to love, back then. Our old man (that is, I) these days would never be up to it."

89. Backus, *The Riverside Counselor's Stories*.

41

Back then there were two sisters. One had married a poor nobody, the other a man of rank. On the last day of the twelfth month, the one with the nobody washed his formal robe and with her own hands hung it out to dry. She meant well, but she wasn't used to that kind of menial work, and she tore the shoulder in the process. It was beyond mending. She could only cry. This news so pained the man of rank that he got out a beautiful light blue robe and sent it to her with this:

murasaki no When *murasaki*
iro koki toki ha purple glows rich in color,
me mo haru ni then the searching eye
no naru kusaki zo gazing out across the plain
wakarezarikeru[90] sees that hue in every leaf.

He must have had the "Musashi Plain" poem in mind.

The final comment in the episode draws attention to *Kokinshū* 867 (anon., "topic unknown"):

murasaki no a single stalk of
hito-moto yuwe ni royal purple upon the
musashino no Moor of Musashi
kusa ha minagara makes me love all the other
ahare to zo miru wild grasses all the more[91]

The poem in Episode 41 is said to have the same "heart" *(kokoro),* or meaning. In fact, the self-same poem appears in the *Kokinshū,* with the headnote: "Sent with a formal cloak to the husband of his wife's younger sister; Ariwara no Narihira."

The *Kokinshū* verse is usually taken to mean that because of the poet's love for his wife, all her relations are dear to him. The *Ise* poem is viewed simply as a variation on it, with the purple color perhaps referring to the color of the robes of the higher-ranking husband (dark purple was restricted to those of the first rank). The difficulty with this interpretation is that the color of the *murasaki* (purple) plant comes from its roots, which obviously cannot been see while it is still in the field. Its flowers are small, unremarkable white blossoms. *Me mo haru ni* is a set of pivot-words *(kake-kotoba)* meaning both "the buds *(me)* sprout *(haru)*" and "the eye *(me)* looks afar *(haru ni).*" Finally, there is some debate about the color *rausau.* The word is usually written with the Chinese character for "green" *(midori/roku),* but McCullough, following Yamagishi Tokuhei, translates it as "blue" and

90. *KKS* 868, Narihira, "Composed to accompany a cloak sent as a gift to the husband of his wife's younger sister" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 190).

91. Rodd, *KKS,* p. 298. Note that this poem immediately precedes the *Ise* one in the *KKS.*

Tyler, in his *Genji,* translates *asagi,* the word used there for the color of the Sixth Rank, as "light blue."

Takeoka's interpretations differs from all of these, demonstrating once again how an *Ise* poem can be seen as supporting almost entirely unrelated interpretations. He insists that *murasaki* in the poem refers only to the robes of the high-ranking, with no relation to the plant. *No naru kusaki*—"the grasses and trees of the fields"—he takes as reference to the (green) color of the Sixth-Rank robes. *Me mo haru* he interprets as "to be far in the future" *(zento mukō),* and he asserts that both men are of the Sixth Rank, which yields: "The time when we wear the dark purple robes of high rank is far in the future—there is no distinction between our Sixth-Rank robes of green [so please use one of my robes]."

As Katagiri notes, the two sisters of this episode should be seen to be the same as those of Episode 1. In fact, according to the *Sonpi bunmyaku* (a late fourteenth-century aristocratic genealogy), Ki no Aritsune had two daughters, one of whom married Narihira, and the younger of whom married Fujiwara no Toshiyuki (d. 901). Toshiyuki's highest office was Intendent of the Right Watch *(uhyōe no kami),* Junior Fourth Rank, Upper); Narihira died at the rank of Junior Fourth, Upper, with the offices of Acting Captain of the Right Watch and Acting Governor of Mino. In other words, they were of very comparable rank throughout their lives, as well as colleagues in the Right Watch.

42

Back then this man was carrying on with a woman who, as he well knew, liked men. She wasn't bad, though, not at all. He visited her often, and despite worrying all the time about what she might be up to, in the end he couldn't stay away. No, he just had to go, and when something kept him from her for a few days, he sent her this:

idete koshi	Those footprints of mine,
ato dani imada	fresh when I last left your door,
kaharaji wo	no doubt are still there,
taga kayohijhi to	but I wonder who by now
ima ha naruran[92]	follows them the other way.

His suspicions about her made him do it.

Early commentators, including Kanera, identified the woman who "liked men" *(iro-gonomi)* as Ono no Komachi, as they did any female character in the *Ise* labeled *iro-gonomi*. None of these traditional identifications had any basis in fact, and all were rejected by later scholars.

Takeoka notes that this short episode includes the words *hata* (though) three times, *naho* (still, nevertheless) twice, and "going" or "not going" three times as well, all adding up to a wonderful evocation of the man's ambivalence.

92. *SKKS* 1408, Narihira.

43

Back then there was a prince called Prince Kaya. Prince Kaya fancied this woman and did a lot for her, but another man was after her, too, and the fellow assumed there was no one else. Still another man heard about all this and wrote her a letter with a drawing of a cuckoo:

hototogisu Hear me, cuckoo bird!
na ga naku sato no There are so many places
amata areba where you call to sing,
naho utomarenu fondly though I think of you,
omofu mono kara[93] I cannot approve your ways,

his poem said. To mollify him she replied:

na nomi tatsu Ill fame undeserved
shide no tawosa ha the bird from the other world
kesa zo naku this morning in song
ihori amata to laments, now your censure strikes
utomarenureba visits to huts far and wide.

It was the fifth month. He answered:

ihori ohoki Haunting many huts,
shide no tawosa ha the bird from the other world
naho tanomu still has all my heart,
waga sumu sato ni provided that voice of hers
kowe ni taezu ha rings out always round my home.

Prince Kaya (794–871) was the seventh son of Emperor Kanmu (737–806, r. 781–806). His sobriquet derives from his residence, the Kaya-no-In. He is mentioned in *Eiga monogatari* (A Tale of Flowering Fortunes) as a master craftsman.[94] The second man was traditionally identified as Narihira.

"The bird from the underworld" *(shide no tawosa)* was another name for the *hototogisu* (cuckoo bird, *Cuculus poliocephalus*), apparently the

93. *KKS* 147.
94. McCullough and McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes,* vol. II, p. 588.

result of the fusing of two folk beliefs, the first that the *hototogisu* could travel between the realms of the living and the dead, over the infernal Mount Shide; the other that the bird's song announced the spring planting season, making it a kind of crop warden or "field boss" *(ta-wosa)*. Takeoka rejects this traditional explanation and argues that *shide* in fact refers to a kind of *nusa,* or sacred wand, and the *tawosa* a kind of priest whom the farmers await eagerly at their homes, for an important blessing, before they can start planting.

The first poem is included as *KKS* II (Spring 2): 147, anonymous and topic unknown. In most love poems using the image of the *hototogisu,* it is the polygynous man who is compared to the bird, not the usually more sedentary woman.

44

Back then someone leaving to take up a provincial appointment received, from a host who considered him a friend, an invitation to a farewell party. The host's wife had him served wine and prepared to present him with a set of women's robes. Her husband composed a poem and got her to tie it to the waist cord of the train:

idete yuku	It was just for you,
kimi ga tame ni to	since you must be leaving us,
nugitsureba	I took off these robes,
ware sahe mo naku	so that this train, mine no more,
narinubeki kana	should spare your train misfortune.

This was the most amusing of the poems for the occasion. The thing is not to declaim it aloud, but rather to savor it inwardly, in silence.

Traditional readings identified the departing official as Ki no Aritsune, Narihira's father-in-law. The same poem, with minor variations, is attributed to Narihira in the *Kokin rokujō*.

The term used for "wife" here, *ie tōji (iwe touji)* in fact refers to "independent, entrepreneurial women"[95] who managed labor and production. Perhaps not coincidently in connection with this episode, they included most of the producers of saké. Traditional readings of this episode supply grammatical particles from other textual lineages so that it is the man who has his wife serve saké, rather than the woman who has a servant do it. The modern scholar Nanba Hiroshi claims that the practice of giving sets of women's clothing was a vestige of when lords would give actual women to subordinates.[96]

The poem is meant to be read as coming from the wife, and it centers on *mo,* which refers to the train of a woman's garment but also means "misfortune."

The final editorial comment has proven amenable to various interpretations, including reading *yomasu* as a causative ("have it declaimed") or a negative (*yomazu,* "don't declaim it").

95. Yoshie, "Gender in Early Classical Japan."
96. Cited by Takeoka, pp. 736–737.

45

Back then there was this man. A couple's cherished daughter longed to have him for her own, but she couldn't very well come out and say so, and no doubt that's why she became ill. As death approached she confessed everything. Her weeping parents informed him, and he rushed over, but she was gone; so there he was, stuck in dull seclusion. It was the last day of the sixth month and very hot. That evening he made music, and late in the night he felt a somewhat cooler breeze. Fireflies were rising high in the air. He lay there, watching them.

yuku hotaru Wandering fireflies,
kumo no ue made should your roaming carry you

inubeku ha high above the clouds,
aki kaze fuku to tell the wild geese on the wing
kari ni tsuge-kose[97] an autumn breeze is blowing.

kuregataki All a summer day,
natsu no higurashi one that seems never to end,
nagamureba I gaze before me,
sono koto to naku absorbed—why, I do not know—
mono zo kanashiki[98] in a pervasive sorrow.

Katagiri, following Yūsai, highlights the man's sympathetic nature: even though he has never set eyes on the girl, he does not hesitate to go in to where she has died, thus incurring a pollution that will require thirty days of seclusion.

The fireflies suggest the girl's soul, while wild geese often served as a symbol for the returning dead, coming back to Japan, as they did, in the autumn—the same season as the annual Festival of the Dead (O-Bon). Commentators such as Yūsai pointed out the similarity of the first poem to one anthologized in the *Wakan rōeishū,* by the Chinese poet Xu Hun (791–854):

> When reed-grown water darkens,
> the fireflies know it's night;
> when wind in the willows blows briskly,
> geese will usher in the fall.[99]

This poem, in turn, was also cited in regard to one by Genji, mourning Murasaki's death:

yoru wo shiru Fireflies rule the night,
hotaru wo mitemo and it is sad to see them
kanashiki ha when at every hour
toki zo to mo naki one burns with the searing flame
omohi narikeri of love now forever lost.[100]

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97. *GSS* 252, Narihira; *KKRJ* 4011, "fireflies."
98. *ShKKS* 270, Narihira, "topic unknown."
99. Rimer and Chaves, *Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing,* p. 70.
100. Tyler, *Genji,* p. 775.

46

Back then this man had a very dear friend. They thought the world of each other and were always together, but then, to their great chagrin, the friend left for another province, and they were parted. A good while later the friend sent back a letter: "It's been too long since we were last together, and I'm terribly afraid you may have forgotten me. It seems to me people *do* often forget a friend they don't see any more." The man sent him:

me karu to mo	Your being away
omohoenaku ni	really makes no sense to me:
wasuraruru	no instant goes by
toki shi nakereba	untouched by your memory—
omokage ni tatsu[101]	your face rises before me.

Modern commentators have felt the need to explain the erotic tone of this poem sent by one man to another. For Takeoka, such phraseology is no more than an affectation *(kyoshoku)* derived ultimately from Chinese poetry. Tsukahara Tetsuo and, following him, Paul Schalow, see this episode as one of five (16, 38, 46, 82, and 83) that portray deep, perhaps even homosexual, relationships between men.[102]

101. *WKRS* 2061, Narihira, "face *(omokage)*."
102. Schalow, "Five Portraits."

47

Back then this man was trying everything to win a particular woman, but she'd heard you couldn't trust him, and she encouraged him less and less. She sent him this:

ohonusa no
hiku te amata ni
narinureba
omohedo e koso
tanomazarikere[103]

With so many hands
clutching at the streamer wand
to tug it their way,
nothing of my affection
gives me any faith in you.

He answered:

ohonusa no
na ni koso tatere
nagarete mo
tsuhi ni yoru se ha
ari to ifu mono wo[104]

Call me, if you like,
a streamer wand claimed by all;
flushed toward the sea,
still that wand will, so they say,
come to rest on a last bar.

"Streamer wands" *(ōnusa)* are sticks to which sacred streamers *(gohei)* or other fabrics are attached. During the Great Purification ceremonies of the sixth and twelfth months, these wands were waved over crowds of people, who then drew the wands to themselves and stroked them, so as to transfer their impurities and sins onto the wands. Finally the wands were cast into a river, to carry away the collected pollutions.

This exchange of poems is also included in the *Kokinshū,* with the first poem anonymous and the second attributed to Narihira. Azumamaro, Mabuchi, and, in modern times, Fukui Teisuke all argued that the present episode was invented for the pre-existing poems. Takeoka points out, however, the nice balance between the prose *tsurenasa nomi masaritsutsu* (only her indifference continued to increase) and the poem's *narinureba* (since there have come to be so many), suggesting that the episode started as a unified whole and the poems were then chosen for the *Kokinshū.*

103. *KKS* 706, anon., "Composed and sent to Narihira by a woman reproaching him for his visits to so many women" (Rodd, *KKS,* p. 252).

104. *KKS* 707, Narihira, "reply."

48

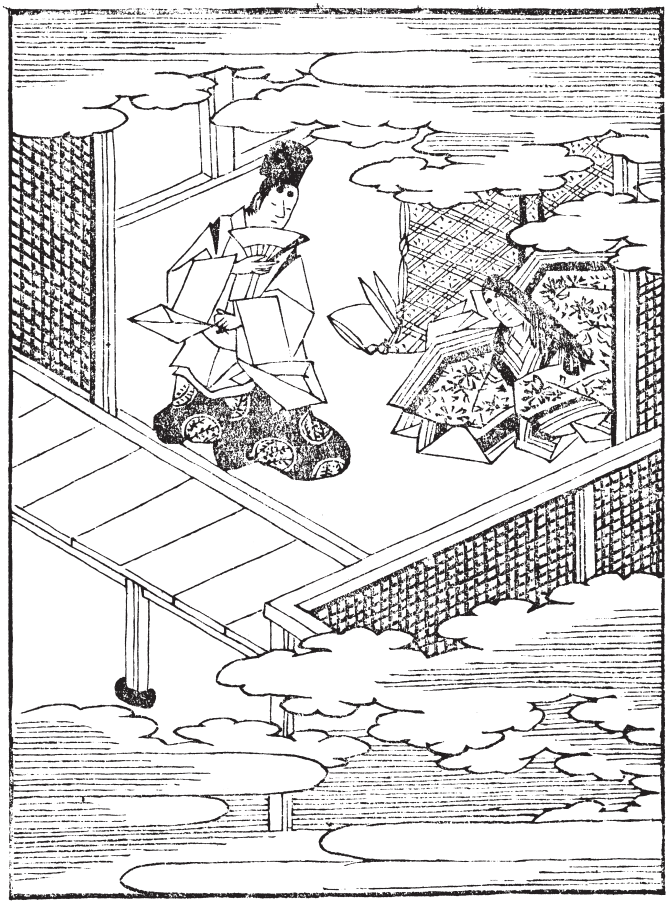
Back then there was this man. He was ready to give a farewell party and awaited the guest of honor, but the fellow never came.

ima zo shiru	Now I understand
kurushiki mono to	just how painful it can be,
hito matamu	waiting endlessly:
sato woba karezu	yes, I should have taken care
tofubekarikeri[105]	not to leave her long alone.

This poem appears as *Kokinshū* 969 with the following headnote: "When Ki no Toshisada was going to Awa Province as Vice-Governor, Narihira wanted to have a farewell party and went to Toshisada's house to tell him it would be that day. However, Toshisada was out gadding about here and there. When he still had not returned late that night, Narihira sent him this poem."[106] The situation and poem of this episode are similar to that of Episode 38.

Modern scholars interpret *hito matamu* as modifying *sato* (yielding "I should call on the woman who is waiting for me"), but Edo-period readers such as Kigin saw a caesura after the third line, as translated above. *Hito matamu* itself can be interpreted either as hypothetical ("she [or "those"] who might be waiting for me") or actual ("she who is waiting for me now").

105. *KKS* 969, Narihira (see commentary for headnote).
106. Rodd, *KKS,* p. 328.



49

Back then this man contemplated his extremely attractive younger sister.

urawakami
neyoge ni miyuru
wakakusa wo
hito no musubamu
koto wo shi zo omofu[107]

The fresh bloom of youth
so commends, grass in new leaf,
the charm of your bed,
the prospect of your harvest
bound elsewhere is misery,

107. *KKRJ* 3548, Narihira; SSZS 1016, Narihira, "composed on seeing how attractive his younger sister was."

he said. She answered:

hatsukusa no	The grass in first leaf
nado medzurashiki	wonders how she is to take
koto no ha zo	this strange talk of yours,
uranaku mono wo	having so far in her life
omohikeru kana[108]	loved you in all innocence.

Some commentators vigorously debated whether the younger sister in this episode was the man's full or half-sister. Even under the Heian period's extremely permissive standards, sexual relations between full siblings were taboo. Nonetheless, the theme appeared in literature, in, for example Nakazumi's love for his sister Atemiya in *Utsuho monogatari*.[109] Of course, commentators such as Yūsai denied the sexual nature of the man's poem altogether, insisting that he was simply expressing concern about his sister finding a suitable marriage partner.

Debate also surrounds the tenor of the sister's response. While earlier commentators denied the erotic context entirely, Keichū catalogued the numerous instances in classical Japanese literature of romantic relationships between half-siblings. This stance was inherited by Arai Munirō in the 1930s and informed McCullough's interpretation in the 1960s: "Here I follow Murasaki Shikibu and those commentators who take the lady's reply as evidence of an intimacy that she has no intention of ending."[110] The reference to Murasaki Shikibu is to Prince Niou's use of the poem in the "Trefoil Knots" (Agemaki) chapter, where he alludes to the presumably sexual relationship between the siblings as he flirts with his own (full) sister, the First Princess. Scholarly consensus today, however, is that the sister is startled by her brother's sudden introduction of romance into their relationship, and now regrets the blind trust she put in him in the past.

108. *SSZS* 1017, anon., "reply."
109. For a translation of this section of the tale, see Cranston, "Atemiya."
110. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 222.

50

Back then there was this man. Stung by a woman's reproaches, he said:

tori no ko wo
towodzutsu towo ha
kasanu to mo
omohanu hito wo
omofu mono ka ha

Say you took ten eggs,
stacked them one on the other,
and did so ten times—
even *you* still could not love
someone who did not love you.

She answered:

asatsuyu ha The dews of morning
kie-nokorite mo may perhaps linger a while
arinubeshi before vanishing,
tare ka kono yo wo but who could put lasting trust
tanomi-hatsubeki[111] in this world you and I share?

He went on:

fuku kaze ni Let last year's blossoms,
kozo no sakura ha heedless of the blowing winds,
chirazu to mo still cling to the bough;
ana tanomigata even so, a lover's heart
hito no kokoro ha[112] defeats every hope of trust.

She retorted:

yuku midzu ni The greater folly
kazu kaku yori mo lies not in writing figures
hakanaki ha on a flowing stream,
omohanu hito wo but in loving loyally
omofu narikeri[113] one who has no love for you.

He said again:

yuku midzu to The fast-flowing stream,
suguru yohahi to the years of advancing age,
chiru hana to the falling blossoms:
idzure mate tefu which of these, for one moment,
koto wo kikuran will heed any call to halt?

These two, with their mutual accusations of infidelity, were probably cheating on each other.

The upper hemistiches of the first four poems all present metaphors of unreliability, to which the lover's affections are then compared. A list of forty

111. *ShGSIS* 1234/1241, anon., "topic unknown."
112. *ShKKS* 1293/1285, Narihira.
113. *KKS* 522.

such hemistiches are given in the "Love" section of the Heian-period poetic handbook *Kokin rokujō*.

The impossibility of stacking eggs seems to have been a well-known trope in the Heian period, appearing in *Kagerō nikki* (The Kagerō Diary), a Chinese poem by Sugawara no Michizane, and ultimately going back to the Chinese *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian). Commentators such as Yūsai cited a passage from the *Wen xuan,* but others such as Shōhaku rejected the allusion. Yūsai also cited a poem by Bo Juyi as the subtext to the man's second poem: "For example, even should last year's blossoms remain on the branch to await the next spring, what is difficult to rely on is this person's heart." The woman's second poem appears in the *Kokinshū* as anonymous; commentators identified various subtexts from the Buddhist sutras.

The final poem does not actually continue the *ada-kurabe* (fickleness-competition) theme; it is more a general statement about the transitory nature of existence. Absent from the *mana-bon* (Chinese-character versions of the *Ise*), it was thought by Arai Munirō to be a later interpolation.

51

Back then this man planted chrysanthemums in someone's garden and wrote:

uwe shi uweba
aki naki toki ya
sakazaran
hana koso chirame
ne sahe kareme ya[114]

I planted them right,
and I doubt that they will bloom
unless in autumn;
but although the blossoms fall,
at root they will never die.

114. *KKS* 268, Narihira.

This poem is attributed to Narihira in the *Kokinshū,* the first of a sequence of thirteen on chrysanthemums. There the headnote reads: "A poem attached to chrysanthemum plants he sent for someone's garden." [115] The poem also appears in the *Yamato monogatari,* with the headnote: "Her Majesty [Takaiko, the Nijō Empress] asked Zai Chūjō [Narihira] for a chrysanthemum, so he presented her with one, attaching to it a slip of paper on which he had written. . . ." [116] This latter context encouraged some commentators to read the poem as an allusion to Takaiko's and Narihira's deep romantic bond. This reading may, in turn, help explain why this otherwise minor episode was chosen for illustration in the *Saga-bon.*

Takaoka claims that the poem is emblematic of Narihira's elliptical style. Several commentators, such as Mabuchi and Kagawa Kageki (1768–1843, a conservative anti-*kokugaku* poet)—not ones usually to agree on anything—following variant texts, insisted that the first line *(uwe shi uweba)* was miswritten and should be read *utsushi-uweba* (since I transplanted them). However, the same expression appears in other poems (in the personal poetry anthology of Izumi Shikibu, for example), and most commentators take it as an example of word duplication *(kasane-kotoba)* that serves to emphasize the action.

The poem has two parenthetical statements (*aki naki toki ya sakazaranu*—"I doubt they will bloom unless in autumn" and *hana koso chirame*—"but although the blossoms fall"), two negative verbs, as well as two emphatic particles—Mezaki Tokue remarks on its "*ton-ton* rhythm." [117]

Some scholars point to poems by the Chinese poet Bo Juyi composed to accompany gifts of potted flowers such as peonies, and others insist that in Narihira's day accompanying chrysanthemums with a Japanese poem, rather than a Chinese verse, would have been thought quite novel. In any case, the poem is most commonly read as a kind of complimentary greeting poem, comparing the host's life and fortune to the unwithering roots of the chrysanthemum—a flower already associated with longevity.

115. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 67.
116. Tahara, *Tales of Yamato,* p. 115.
117. Cited by Takeoka, p. 815.

52

Back then there was this man. When someone sent him some fancily done-up rice cakes he replied with a pheasant, accompanied by:

ayame kari
kimi ha numa ni zo
madohikeru
ware ha no ni idete
karu zo wabishiki

Pursuing sweet flag
you made your wandering way
through marshy places
while I went out on the moors
pursuing a lonely hunt.

Uncertainty persists to this day as to whether the gift is of "stacked rice cakes" *(kasanari chimaki)* or "decorated rice cakes" *(kazari-chimaki)*. These steamed triangular-shaped rice balls wrapped in bamboo leaves are still eaten in Japan and China.

Sweet flag *(Acorus calamus* var. *angustatus)* was the focus of a festival, Tango no Sechi, held on the fifth day of the fifth month, when the plant was hung inside buildings, worn on the person, and used in baths to ward off disease. The date later became Boys' Day, now Children's Day. Most commentators assume that the *chimaki* here must have been either wrapped in sweet flag leaves or decorated with the flower.

The poem relies on the pun *karu,* which can mean both "to reap"—as in reaping sweet flag—and "to hunt"—as in hunting pheasant.

53

Back then this man got together with a woman it was difficult for him to meet, and while they were still exchanging sweet nothings a cock crowed.

ikade ka ha	How, I ask you, how
tori no nakuran	can that cock possibly crow,
hito shirezu	when for my poor heart
omofu kokoro ha	teeming with secret yearnings
mada yofukaki ni[118]	this is still the deep of night?

Commentators suggested different reasons to explain why the woman was so difficult to meet *(ahigataki):* she was of a higher rank; she had a husband; or, according to the *Waka chiken shū,* she was the Ise Priestess.

Kanera claimed there were no mysteries to this episode *(kakuretaru tokoro nashi),* but the chaste Takeoka manages to swim against the tide. He insists that when the verb *afu* is used consecutively, as here (*ahigataki onna ni ahite;* lit., "meeting a woman difficult to meet"), the first *afu* means simply to meet *(taimen suru),* while the second means to have sex.[119] He then interprets the situation as one where the man is meeting a woman with whom he has not yet had sex. Accordingly, Takeoka insists that in all three appearances in the *Ise,* the expression *monogatari nado su* does not mean, as it is usually interpreted, "pillow talk" *(mutsu-goto),* but simply small talk *(zatsudan).* Finally, he claims that *hito shirezu* can mean either that others besides the couple do not know of their love, or that no one other than the lover himself knows of his love, including the beloved. Takeoka adopts this latter interpretation, yielding an entirely different meaning for the episode: the cock crows while the man's love for the woman is still hidden deep, like the night, in his heart.

Keichū was the first to suggest that this episode is indebted to the following phrase from the Tang-era *Yūsenkutsu* (Dwelling of the Playful God-

118. *ShGSS* 816/820, Narihira, "composed when the cock crowed, on a night he had gone to a woman's house but still had things to say."

119. In all three of his examples, however, from the *Genji, Izumi Shikibu nikki,* and *Kin'yōshū,* the second verb is in the negative, in other words, "to meet but not to meet."

desses), translated by Vos as: "The first [love] experience is difficult to realize and valuable. During a short while we had intercourse several times. [But] who would have thought that an abominable miserable magpie would frighten people in the middle of the night and that a coaxing crazy cock would crow daylight at the time of the third watch?" [120]

120. Vos, *A Study,* II: 107.

54

Back then he sent this to a woman who denied him any encouragement:

yuki-yaranu On these sleeves of mine,
yumejhi wo tanomu longing all in vain to take
tamoto ni ha the pathway of dreams,
amatsusora naru settles what appears to be
tsuyu ya okuran high heaven's celestial dew.

Anonymous *Gosenshu* 559 reads:

yuki-yaranu On these sleeves of mine,
yumejhi ni madofu lost and befuddled on
tamoto ni ha the pathway of dreams
amatsusora naki settles what is not
tsuyu zo okikeru high heaven's celestial dew.

Some versions of the *Ise* have *tadoru* instead of *tanomu* (to take), meaning much the same as *madofu* (to be lost).

Yuki-yaranu yumejhi means that even on the pathway to the woman's home that exists in the man's dreams, he is unable to make any progress, try as he might. *Tanomu,* rather than *madofu* or *tadoru,* suggests that, however unsatisfactory, this dream-road is the only means he can rely on to meet her—there is no chance of meeting her in reality. While *amatsusora naki tsuyu* (dew not of heaven's sky) in the *Gosenshu* poem is simply a way of saying "tears," the *Ise* version suggests that the man travels the road of love in his dreams, his sleeves sodden by both dream-dew and tears.

55

Back then this man had his heart set on a woman, but he seemed to be getting nowhere with her.

omohazu ha	Perhaps it is true—
ari mo suramedo	you have no real love for me;
koto no ha no	but your every word,
worifushigoto ni	whenever you choose to speak,
tanomaruru kana[121]	floods me even now with hope.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the woman as either the Somedono Empress Meishi or Takaiko, the Nijō Empress; Shōhaku insisted that it is no one in particular.

What little debate there is about this poem centers on *koto no ha,* or "words." Were these words of the woman her earlier vows of love, or are they the occasional poem or letter she still sends to the man? Yūsai cited the following *Kokinshū* poem (XV: 794) as also having "the meaning of this poem" *(kono uta no kokoro):*

yoshino-gaha	although you've become
yoshi ya hito koso	cold as the waters of the
tsurakarame	Yoshino River
hayaku ihiteshe	I shall never forget the
koto ha wasureji	pledge I made when first we met.[122]

Takeoka draws attention to two more phrases, insisting that the *yo ni* of *eumajiu narite no yo ni* (lit., "when circumstances had become such that he was unlikely to have [the woman]") means "circumstances" and not just "when" or "time," indicating a change in the man's own circumstances or situation. Further, since the text does not say that the man sent the poem to the woman, Takeoka reads it as a soliloquy *(doku'ei),* composed and recited only to himself. Finally, he avers that *worifushigoto ni* (every time) refers to the regular recurrence of something, such as the coming of the new year, or the blossoming of the plum trees, and alludes to the occasion when the man and woman first exchanged vows.

121. *ShGSS* 852/856, Narihira, "sent to a woman who was difficult to meet."
122. Rodd, *KKS,* p. 277.

56

Back then this man so suffered from love's torments, abed or awake, that he could bear them no longer.

waga sode ha
kusa no ihori ni
aranedomo
kurureba tsuyu no
yadori narikeri[123]

No, these sleeves of mine
certainly cannot be called
a hut thatched with grass,
but even so, once night falls,
all I inhabit is dew.

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* identified the Nijō Empress Takaiko as the object of the man's infatuation. Azumamaro rejected the attribution to Narihira and insisted the style of the poem is not consistent with Narihira's. Takeoka observes that without the headnote the poem is one of autumn melancholy, similar to several in the *Kokinshū* (e.g., 940, 944). It is the headnote that turns it into a poem about love.

123. *SCSS* 1125/1123, Narihira, "topic unknown."

57

Back then this man was nursing a secret passion. He sent his cruel tormentor:

kohi-wabinu	I am sick with love.
ama no karumo ni	Specter shrimp like those that lurk
yadoru tefu	in seaweed harvests,
ware kara mi wo mo	I, a mere ghost of myself,
kudakitsuru kana[124]	willfully cling to ruin.

The poem is centered around the pivot-word *(kake-kotoba) warekara,* which is on one hand the name of a kind of shrimp and, on the other, means "from oneself" or "of one's own accord." The two lines before *warekara* serve as a "preface" *(jo)* describing the shrimp *(Caprella)*. The *warekara* lives in seaweed and takes on the color of its surroundings. Moreover, it periodically sheds its shell, suggesting the image of the final lines *mi wo mo / kudakitsuru* (lit., "my body too / breaks into pieces").

124. *SCSS* 720.

58

Back then this man, a thoroughgoing sophisticate in matters of passion and taste, built himself a house in the locality called Nagaoka. The nice-looking women in service at the princess's residence next door spotted him just as he was off to look after the reaping—this *was* the country, after all. "What a job for a fancy gentleman like *you!*" they exclaimed, crowding into the house. He fled to hide in an inner room. One of the women:

arenikeri — Why, it's abandoned!
ahare ikuyo no — What a shame! How many years
yado nare ya — can the place have stood
sumiken hito no — while its sometime resident
otodzure mo senu[125] — failed ever to return?

So there they were, sitting around his house. He sent out:

mugura ohite — Now a waste of weeds,
aretaru yado no — this sadly abandoned house
uretaki ha — has just one problem:
kari ni mo oni no — the odd demon gathering,
sudaku narikeri — jibber-jabbering away.

"We'll collect the gleanings!" the women said. He replied:

uchi-wabite — "Paupers like ourselves
ochiho hirofu to — have to pick up fallen ears":
kikamaseba — if you told me *that*,
ware mo tadzura ni — then, yes, I would go with you
yukamashi mono wo — out into the paddy fields.

Emperor Kanmu moved the capital from Nara to Nagaoka in 784. Kanmu had a great number of daughters, one of whom was Princess Ito, Narihira's mother. Many of Kanmu's daughters were believed to have stayed in Nagaoka when the capital was moved to Kyoto (Heian-kyō) in 794. Such

125. *KKS* 984, anon.

circumstances would make Narihira building a house in the area thoroughly plausible, and the young ladies who tease him in this episode could have been his cousins (see also Episode 84).

The first poem is attributed to Lady Ise in the *Kokin rokujō,* which led to the belief that Narihira lived with her in Nagaoka, where he wrote the first draft of the *Ise* that she eventually completed after his death. The Sanjōnishi lineage *Waka chiken shū* argued that this occurred while Narihira was supposedly in self-imposed exile in the Eastern Provinces (see Episode 9). This would explain how he was close enough to still visit Takaiko and play his flute outside where she was being kept, as depicted in Episode 65.[126]

Commentators have long had difficulty discerning the tone of this episode. Debate focuses on the first term to describe the man, *kokoro-tsuki,* which is interpreted to mean anything from "discerning" to "genial." Certainly a main point of the episode is to display the quick wit in the man's repeated repartees against multiple opponents.[127]

126. Klein, *Allegories,* pp. 270–271.

127. For further discussion, including on the earliest illustration to this episode, see Mostow, "Female Readers."

59

Back then this man changed his mind about the Capital for some reason and decided he preferred to live in the Eastern Hills.

sumi-wabinu Go on living here?
ima ha kagiri to No thank you, I've had enough.
yama-zato ni A mountain village
mi wo kakusubeki where I can just disappear:
yado motometen that's the home I'm looking for.

What with one thing and another he became very ill, and he was at death's door when water dashed in his face revived him.

waga uhe ni Raining down on me,
tsuyu zo oku naru why, I think it must be dew!
ama no kaha River of Heaven—
to wataru fune no could these drops be from the oars
kai no shidzuku ka[128] of a boat rowing across?

he said, and back to life he came.

While the intertexts to this episode offer a number of tantalizing suggestions, the overall meaning remains obscure.

The beginning words echo those of Episodes 8 and 9, alluding to Narihira's exile. For the *Ise monogatari shō,* this episode provided the clue that Narihira did not actually go to the Eastern Provinces, but rather to the Eastern Hills, where he was kept under house arrest by Fujiwara no Yoshifusa.[129]

The first poem seems closely related to one attributed to Narihira in the *Gosenshū* (1083): "When he was tired of affairs *(yo no naka).*"

sumi-wabinu Tired of living,
ima ha kagiri to now I've reached my limit—
yama-zato ni thinking thus I will

128. *KKS* 863, anon., "topic unknown."
129. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 271.

tsumagi korubeki go off in search of a hut
yado motometen where I can gather firewood.

This poem is identical to that in the *Ise,* except for the fourth line, *tsumagi korubeki.* But there is no obvious point to the *Gosenshū* poem—no clever word play or conceit—unless the *yo no naka* of the headnote is taken to mean "romantic relations" and *tsumagi* is a pivot-word incorporating the word *tsuma,* or "wife." No commentator has made this suggestion, however.

The second poem appears in the *Kokinshū,* anonymous and "topic unknown." However, many scholars believe that it is a banquet poem from the Tanabata Festival. On the seventh night of the seventh month, the Herd Boy Star (Altair) is allowed to row across the River of Heaven (the Milky Way) to visit his wife, the Weaver Maid Star (Vega), on the other side. According to Keichū, in its original context the dew/spray on the speaker's face would have been a metaphor for the reception of some sort of favor or gift from a superior. Takeoka maintains that the *Ise* author has purposely recontextualized this verse, but he does not make clear to what purpose. At any rate, he interprets the entire episode as centering on the man's "nervous exhaustion" *(shinkyō suijaku),* due to which his spirit has left his body. When he is awakened, he believes himself to be in another world. Premodern scholars such as Yūsai instead remarked on how extraordinary it was for someone to compose a poem immediately after having been called back from the brink of death.

Almost all early commentators quote a passage from the *Lotus Sutra:* "Then, sprinkling him with cool water, he brought him to, but spoke to him no more." [130] Such meaningless citation of "serious" texts was used as a way to bolster the cultural authority of the *Ise.*

130. Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom,* p.86.

60

Back then there was this man. Palace service kept him too busy to give his wife much thought, so she took up meanwhile with someone else, who promised to do right by her, and off she went with him to the provinces. On his way to Usa as an imperial envoy, the man gathered that she was now the wife of the local functionary charged with entertaining official guests. "Have your wife pour my wine," he said. "I won't drink it otherwise." When she came in and offered him the cup, he took a tangerine from among the delicacies provided and said:

satsuki matsu	Come the year's fifth month
hana-tachibana no	when blossoms deck the orange trees,
ka wo kageba	their fragrance, for me,
mukashi no hito no	recalls the scent of those sleeves
sode no ka zo suru[131]	*she* used to wear long ago.

That brought it all back to her. She became a nun and entered a mountain retreat.

Episodes 24, 60, and 62 all depict wives of minor officials who leave their husbands due to neglect and then are embarrassed when they meet them again. As Katagiri notes, it is the woman, not the man, who is the focus of each of these episodes (he includes Episode 23 in this group as well).

Most recent commentators do not think that the imperial messenger is demanding that the woman pour his drink, but rather that she accept a drink from him *(o-nagare)* and then offer one in return. The central question, of course, is how to read the man's attitude. Is he trying to embarrass his ex-wife? Is he rebuking her for deserting him? Again, as Katagiri points out, the woman can hardly be faulted: not only does her husband neglect her due to his duties at court (which may well have been the occasion for other dalliances), but the text specifically states that *kokoro mame narazarikeru,* "his feelings were not sincere." Certainly the man's actions seem heartless. Yet, in fact, most scholars today see the episode as designed to demonstrate the man's kindness: insisting on exchanging cups of saké with her, he shows that he still has feelings for her.[132]

The poem appears in the *Kokinshū* as anonymous and "topic unknown." It is, in actuality, extremely famous and often alluded to when speaking of past love. Katagiri prefers to see the man as quoting the poem rather than composing it, but he admits that there is no other such example in the *Ise,* apart from the comment appended to Episode 1.

131. *KKS* 139, anon., "topic unknown."
132. For an illustrated Edo-period interpretation, see Mostow, "Court Classics."

61

Back then this man went on a journey to Tsukushi, where he heard someone remark behind a blind, "There goes a woman-chaser if ever there was one."

some-kaha wo
wataramu hito no
ikade ka ha
iro ni naru tefu
koto no nakaran[133]

Cross the river Stains
if you will, but tell me, then,
how you will contrive
such passage as to avoid
turning color on the way,

he said. She replied:

na ni shi ohaba
ada ni zo arubeki
tahare-jima
nami no nureginu
kiru to ifu nari

If the name were fair,
frivolous indeed would be
Giddiways Island
that only the waves, they say,
compromise with sopping robes.

Tsukushi is an ancient name for the island of Kyushu. Some-gawa (Stains River) is a real river in Fukuoka, and Japanese poetry often speaks of being "stained" with love. The man suggests that anyone who crosses the Some-gawa will naturally get stained, that is, become amorous.

Few commentators have wondered who the woman (or women) behind the blinds may be. However, Takeoka and a few other scholars assert that the women are in fact itinerant prostitutes *(yūgyōfu)*. If so, then the man's poem refers not only to himself, but to the women as well: "Coming here, I, as well as you, have become stained with love, haven't I?"

In the reply-poem, *ada* means "insincere, frivolous" while a *nureginu* (sopping robe) signifies a baseless rumor. Taware-jima—again, a real island—is written with the characters for "elegant, or amorous, island" *(fūryū-shima)*. The woman's poem means: "If 'Amorous Island' were true to its name, then it (and I) would be frivolous and loose indeed, but in fact the name is not appropriate—it is a 'sopping robe,' or baseless accusation,

133. *SIS* 1234, Narihira.

caused only by the fact that the island is constantly swept by waves. In the same way, I am no frivolous woman, despite your suggestion that you and I have the same kind of amorous character." Contrast this with McCullough's paraphrase: "What's in a name? The 'River of Dyes' has nothing to do with your character; that was formed long ago. And obviously 'Flirtation Island' is not flirtatious. Do you remember the saying about drenched garments? One might say that this spray-covered island is wearing them, for from a distance it seems indeed to be clad in white silk. River or no river, your own clothes are quite dry; no one has falsely accused you of anything." [134]

134. McCullough, *Ise*, p. 227.

62

Back then a woman he hadn't called on for ages let someone or other persuade her—perhaps she wasn't that bright—to take up domestic service in another province, where she appeared before him to bring him his meal. "Send me that woman who waited on me before," he said to his host that evening; so his host did.

"Do you recognize me?" he asked.

inishihe no Where can it have gone,
nihohi ha idzura the fresh beauty that was yours,
sakura-bana O cherry blossom?
kokeru kara to mo How by now the passing years
narinikeru kana have stripped all your branches bare!

Mortified, she said nothing.

"Why don't you answer?" he pressed her.

"I'm blind with tears," she murmured, "I can't speak."

kore ya kono What is this I see?
ware ni afumi wo While you fled Ōmi
nogaretsutsu and my company,
toshitsuki furedo the years have kept passing by,
masarigaho naki and they have not improved you,

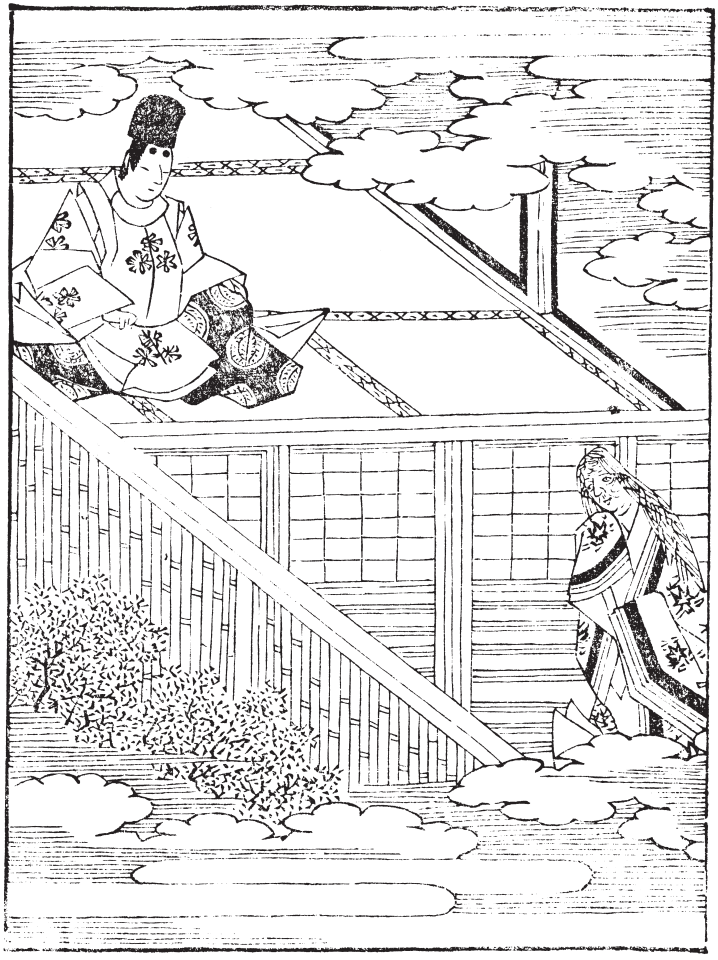
he went on, then took off his outer robe and gave it to her; but she left it there and fled. No one knows where she went.

This episode obviously bears a close similarity to Episode 60 (and 24). Takeoka interprets it in the same way as Episode 60, with the man sympathizing with the state into which his former wife has fallen. Katagiri, on the other hand, sees the episode as standing in direct contrast to the previous one: the woman here is clearly labeled as "not that bright" *(kokoro-kashikoku ya arazarikemu),* and her confidant (the "someone" of the translation above) "unreliable" *(hakanaki);* moreover, rather than becoming someone else's wife *(onna aruji),* the woman in this episode is reduced to domestic service. Indeed, Katagiri speculates she may have even been sold into service. Likewise, rather than the sympathy expressed by the former husband in the earlier episode, Katagiri interprets this husband's attitude as one of sarcasm

and cruelty. He does not call for her to exchange cups of saké, but rather for sexual servicing. His attitude is one of disdain.

Curiously, because of the wording of the first phrase of this episode *(toshi-goro otodzurezarikeru onna),* commentators as early as Shōhaku interpreted the episode as one where it was the woman who neglected the man (understood as Narihira), and that the poem about the cherry blossoms referred to himself. The misunderstanding was not corrected until Mabuchi in the eighteenth century.

Finally, the second poem includes the phrase *afu mi wo nogare* (you fled Ōmi / and my company) where *afu mi* is clearly a pivot-word *(kake-kotoba)* meaning both "I whom you meet" and the place-name Ōmi. The present episode, however, says nothing about Ōmi. Clearly, the original story, which has been adapted to the *Ise,* was set in Ōmi, and the story has been included in the *Ise* precisely because of its similarity to Episode 60.



63

Back then a woman hungry for love longed to find a nice, sensitive man. She couldn't very well admit this, though, so she called her three sons together and told them about it as though the idea were only a dream. Two of them flatly ignored her, but the third divined that a fine man would soon come into her life. That cheered her up a lot. Other men are brutes, he said to himself; and so he decided the thing to do was to get her together with our old friend Ariwara no Narihira. Narihira was out hunting when he came

across him, seized his horse's bridle, and told him the whole story. Touched, Narihira came and slept with the woman. He never came back, though. She went to his house and was peering in at him through a crack when he caught sight of her.

momotose ni	Only one year shy,
hitotose taranu	she is, of a full hundred,
tsukumogami	with her seaweed hair,
ware wo kofurashi	and I believe she loves me.
omokage ni miyu	There she is: that haunting face,

he said. When she saw him make as though to leave she hurried home, catching herself along the way on shrubs and thorns, and lay down.

Our hero went and spied on her, as she had done on him. He saw her go to bed, sighing,

samushiro ni	On the narrow mat
koromo kata-shiki	where I spread my sleeves alone,
koyohi mo ya	must I yet again,
kohishiki hito ni	tonight, lie without the man
ahade nomi nen[135]	I so long for as my own?

Out of pity he slept with her that night. Any ordinary man will love a woman he likes, but not one he doesn't. Narihira, though, wasn't one to draw the line anywhere.

This is the only episode in the entire *Tales of Ise* to refer to Narihira by name. Moreover, it refers to him as "this Narihira" *(kono Zaigo Chūjō),* indicating that the reader was expected to have a clear image of Narihira and his character. The story's structure, too, is very different from the usual exchange of poems. All this suggests that the episode is a late addition to the text. As Katagiri argues, the hero of the first stage of the *Ise* is a man who pursues ideal women, regardless of failure and disappointment. The hero of the third stage, on the other hand, is a profligate lover who sleeps with women without distinction, women who are often far from ideal.

135. *KKS* 689, "topic unknown."

But who is this randy senior citizen? According to the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō,* she is Seishi, the widowed consort of Emperor Montoku and the daughter of Ki no Natora. Sons One and Two are Major Captain of the Right Minamoto no Akikage and Grand Counsellor Minamoto no Sekiji, children born of her earlier relationship with Minister of the Right Minamoto no Arikuni. And the third son? None other than Imperial Prince Koretaka—it is Montoku who will pass Koretaka over to give the throne instead to a son by a Fujiwara daughter (see Episodes 82–83).

64

Back then this man apparently didn't know where to find the woman he was after, never having actually been alone with her in private; so he sent her:

fuku kaze ni
waga mi wo nasaba
tama-sudare
hima motometsutsu
irubeki mono wo[136]

If I could just change
my person into a breeze,
ah, those jeweled blinds:
I would sniff out a way through,
and in to you I would go.

She replied:

toritomenu
kaze ni ha ari to mo
tama-sudare
ta ga yurusaba ka
hima motomubeki

Say you *were* a breeze
no one can keep from blowing,
then, those jeweled blinds:
by whose leave would you make bold
to come sniffing your way through?

The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* of course took the woman here to be the Nijō Empress Takaiko, after she had entered the palace, and Takeoka, too, makes a connection to Episode 4. More plausibly, the situation seems to be one in which the man and woman have been exchanging amorous letters, along the lines of Episode 95, and the man now wants to meet her in her room at court. Takeoka further suggests that the phrase "by whose leave?" *(ta ga yurusaba)* suggests circumstances similar to Episode 5, where the master (or mistress) of the house does indeed allow the man to enter.

136. *SSZS* 1214, Narihira, "composed when he had not been secretly alone with a woman."

65

Back then there was a lady so favored by His Majesty that she had leave to wear the forbidden colors. She was a cousin of His Majesty's mother. This lady came to know a man, still extremely young, who served in the privy chamber. His name was Ariwara. He was allowed to join the gentlewomen, so he would come and sit with her in their room. "This isn't right," she said. "You're going to get me into serious trouble. Please stop it."

omofu ni ha Love, the thought of you
shinoburu koto zo overwhelms all discretion,

makenikeru leaving me undone.
afu ni shi kaheba As long as I can see you,
sa mo araba are[137] let the world do what it will,

he answered. When she retired to her private room, he followed her there, oblivious to people's stares, until in desperation she sought refuge at home. Sure enough, he took this as his great opportunity. Off he went there, too, to everyone's amusement. Early the next morning, in full view of the Palace servants, he would toss his shoes well inside before entering the Privy Chamber.

After carrying on for some time in this eccentric manner he saw that he was headed for dismissal and ruin. "What am I to do?" he begged the buddhas and gods, "Please, please rid me of this obsession!"

Unfortunately the obsession only worsened, until he could no longer bear the agony of his longing. He summoned a yin-yang master and a priestess of the gods and took them off to perform the purification against unwanted passion. While the rite progressed, the host of her adorable traits so overwhelmed him that he was now far worse off than before.

kohi seji to That most solemn rite
mitarashi-gaha ni done beside the cleansing stream
seshi misogi to purge me of love:
kami ha ukezu mo alas, in the end the gods
narinikeru kana[138] saw fit to reject it all!

The Emperor was noble in looks and figure, and his voice devoutly calling the Buddha's name was so inspiring, that the lady wept. "It is too hard," she cried, "that my evil karma should keep me from serving such a lord! Look how this youth has taken possession of me!"

In time His Majesty learned what was going on and banished the offender, while his mother expelled her cousin from the Palace and shut her up in a storehouse. The imprisoned lady shed more tears.

ama no karu Harvests seafolk reap
mo ni sumu mushi no harbor among the tangle
warekara to specter shrimp: so I,
ne wo koso nakame weeping, mourn my misfortune,
yo woba uramiji[139] yet hold none but me to blame.

137. *SKKS* 1151, Narihira, "topic unknown."
138. *KKS* 501.
139. *KKS* 807, Naishi no Suke Fujiwara no Naoiko.

The young man came every night from his far province, played beautiful music on his flute, and sang touching songs for her in a lovely voice. She in her storehouse knew all too well who it was, but there was nothing she could do to join him.

sari to mo to
omofuramu koso
kanashikere
aru ni mo aranu
mi wo shirazu shite[140]

Perhaps, just perhaps:
so he is surely hoping—
ah, the poor darling!—
never knowing that his love
hovers between life and death.

Such were her thoughts. When she failed to come to him, he roamed around for a while and then returned to his place of exile, where he sang:

itadzura ni
yukite ha kinuru
mono yuwe ni
mimakuhoshisa ni
izanaharetsutsu[141]

Nothing came of it—
going to her all that way,
stealing back again;
yet longing to be with her
seduces my every step.

This must have happened in Emperor Seiwa's reign. The imperial mother would have been the Somedono Empress, or, as some would have it, the Empress of the Fifth Ward.

The beginning description of the woman clearly suggests that she is Takaiko, the cousin of Meishi, the Somedono Empress and the mother of Emperor Seiwa. The Ariwara must of course be Narihira. The circumstances indicate that the events described occur during Emperor Seiwa's reign. The young Ariwara has not yet gone through his coming-of-age ceremony and so is still viewed as a child. He is therefore allowed access to the women's quarters, which are barred to men. However, he is romantically precocious and blithely pursues the emperor's favored consort, much to the amusement of those around him. Apparently the emperor knows nothing of this.

While at first this situation may seem reminiscent of the beginning of the *Ise,* where the relationship between Narihira and Takaiko is described

140. *SCSS* 868/866, anon.
141. *KKS* 620.

in Episodes 3, 4, 5, and 6, in fact it is very different. The earlier version of events was supposed to have taken place during the time of Seiwa's father, Emperor Montoku. Takaiko, aged around sixteen, was selected as a future consort for Seiwa, since he was only about eight years old at the time. While he was growing up, Narihira, aged somewhere between twenty-five and thirty-three, was believed to have started an affair with the teenaged Takaiko. While the earlier story is historically plausible, the version in Episode 65 is not: Takaiko (b. 842) was seventeen years younger than Narihira (b. 825), while Emperor Seiwa (b. 850) was a full twenty-five years younger than Narihira. The scenario described here sounds like that portrayed in *The Tale of Genji* between Genji, his father the emperor, and his father's young wife, Fujitsubo.

"This lady came to know a man by the name of Ariwara" *(arihara narikeru wotoko no . . . kono wonna ahi-shiritarikeri):* while Takanao claimed that *ai-shiri* meant to know carnally, Takeoka insists that the relationship is not yet physical. However, at least by the time the young man is throwing his shoes into the courtiers' hall, the couple has clearly spent the night together.

"This isn't right," she said. "You're going to get me into serious trouble" *(ito katahara nari mi mo horobinan):* support can be found for interpreting the sentence to mean "you are going to get me into trouble" or "you are going to get ***us*** into trouble." Takeoka seems unique in taking *mi* to refer only to the young man (you are going to get ***yourself*** in trouble)—the woman is cautioning him that an excess of love will be bad for his health. Many commentators, too, see the young man as concerned less about dismissal than about his health. The lack of concern about the lady's situation is noticeable.

Tantric interpretations such as the *Ise monogatari zuinō,* which believed that the *Ise* represented "a complex philosophical argument for ritual sex as a path to enlightenment,"[142] required considerable interpretive adjustment to this episode, for how could Narihira pray to the gods and buddhas to free him from a love that is the very means to spiritual awakening? Klein explains: "*Zuinō* asserts that it is the unenlightened Nijō no Kisaki [Takaiko] who asks Narihira to make the prayer and perform the ceremony. Narihira himself, as the patriarch of Harmonious Union [I-Se], would never have made such a petition. The poem is understood as follows:

> Since everything is I-Se, what kami would accept a prayer to not follow the path of doing I-Se? Because Nijō no Kisaki had not acquired

142. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 273.

> the enlightenment that what is called "kami" is actually just your own consciousness, she said, "Perform this rite so we can escape [from this passion]." Although Narihira let Nijō no Kisaki see him perform the rite, he thought to himself: "Because I have acquired the enlightenment [of I-Se], [to stop loving] would be unreasonable to my consciousness, so it will be unacceptable to the kami as well." Therefore he said, "Alas, the kami has not accepted it." [143]

Klein sums up as follows: "In other words, since Narihira wants to sleep with Nijō no Kisaki (and knows sleeping with her is actually a path to enlightenment), and since the kami is none other than Narihira's own consciousness, of course her asking him to stop their love affair is unacceptable to the kami." [144]

The emperor finally hears of the affair and banishes the young man, while his mother locks the lady up in a storehouse *(kura)*. Something similar occurs in the tenth-century *Ochikubo monogatari* (The Tale of the Lady Ochikubo). As Katagiri notes, however, the places used for exile in the early Heian period were fairly fixed, and none of them was close enough to allow the man to come back to visit the capital night after night. This conundrum fed into the allegorical interpretations of the Reizei school: Narihira's actual place of exile was the Eastern Hills (Higashiyama) of Kyoto, as suggested by Episode 59 and by the references to him going to "the East" (Azuma) at the beginning of the *Ise*. Clearly, it would have been easy to get from the Eastern Hills to wherever in the capital Takaiko was incarcerated.

Warekara in the woman's first poem is a pivot-word *(kake-kotoba)* meaning, as we saw in Episode 57, "from myself" and a specter shrimp. Yet here it occasioned a little lecture on morality from Hosokawa Yūsai: "[*Warekara* is used] in order to say, 'This is not someone else's fault—the fault is mine.' When one understands this principle, there is no occasion to blame either others or the world at large. To not resent others is the apex of harmony *(wa)*. Harmony rules the world and is the foundation for preserving one's self. It is a very fine thing *(arigataki mono)* that her feelings in composing this poem are such that she reflects on her own faults and does not blame the world."

143. Ibid., pp. 288–289.
144. Ibid., p. 289.

66

Back then this man, who had an estate in Settsu Province, took his brothers and friends on a trip to Naniwa. There he saw boats along the shore.

nanihadzu wo	Naniwa Harbor
kesa koso mitsu no	this morning, yes, I have seen:
ura goto ni	along every shore
kore ya kono yo wo	such boats as carry us all
umi wataru fune[145]	across the sea of sorrows.

The others were so moved that they left without making any poems of their own.

The situation described in this episode is similar to that of Episode 87, where a man, his siblings, and friends go to his estate in Settsu, composing poems on the scenery en route. The poem is included in the *Gosenshū* and attributed there to Narihira. The early twentieth-century *Ise* scholar Arai took the *Gosenshū*'s mention of Settsu as evidence that that is where Narihira was exiled.

As Katagiri notes, to the aristocrats of Kyoto, the sight of the sea was an unusual and marvelous experience, as were larger seafaring ships. The poet expresses his admiration for the scene before him, yet, like earlier *Man'yōshū* poets, he also adds a philosophical or religious dimension. Both his admiration and the spiritual tenor are embodied in the poem's pivot-words: *mitsu* can mean both "beautiful harbor" and "I have seen"; *umi* is both "sea" and "sorrows."

This episode starts a sequence of three (66, 67, 68) of poems on natural scenery. With its veiled reference to Narihira and his brother Yukihira, Katagiri identifies this as a Stage Two episode.

145. *GSS* 1245, Narihira, "written when he had gone to live in Settsu Province in a time of distress" (McCullough, *Ise,* p. 229).

67

Back then this man took his friends on a second-month outing to the province of Izumi. In Kawachi Province they saw the Ikoma hills now veiled, now clear, as clouds billowed ceaselessly around them. Cloud-covered in the morning, they cleared at midday. New-fallen snow, brilliant white, lay on the boughs. At the sight, he alone among his companions made a poem:

kinofu kefu	Yesterday, today
kumo no tachi-mahi	the clouds rose, wandered, billowed

kakurofu ha only to conceal
hana no hayashi wo what they wished no eye to see:
ushi to narikeri a great forest of blossoms.

Many commentaries, both medieval and modern, see this episode as a continuation of the previous one. Like it and the following, this poem is a model of composition on a famous place *(meisho* or *uta-makura)*. Early uses of the Ikoma hills in the *Man'yōshū* spoke of crossing them to see one's lover, and we saw a similar romantic usage at the end of Episode 23. However, here they appear in a group of three episodes that are among the few in the entire *Ise* that do not concern themselves with relationships between men and women.

The poem is a standard example of *mitate* or "elegant confusion," likening the snow to cherry blossoms. It is also an example of what in modern terminology is called "personification" *(gijinka)*, a kind of affective fallacy, in which natural phenomena are addressed as conscious agents. Some have interpreted the agent of the poem as the Ikoma hills, wishing to hide themselves, but the actual agent is clearly the clouds, jealous of the snow on the mountains and trying to prevent others from seeing it.

68

Back then this man set off to the province of Izumi. Passing along the beach at Sumiyoshi, in the locality and county of that name, he found the place so beautiful that he dismounted again and again to sit and admire it. One of those with him suggested making poems on the phrase, "the beach at Sumiyoshi." The man:

kari nakite Geese crying on high,
kiku no hana saku flowering chrysanthemums

aki ha aredo	do well for autumn,
haru no umibe ni	but, for a seaside in spring,
sumiyoshi no hama	the beach at Sumiyoshi.

That did it. No one else even tried.

This is the final episode in the 66–67–68 sequence that depicts Narihira and others traveling to Izumi. Sumiyoshi is in Settsu province, through which the party is presumably passing on its way to Izumi. Sumiyoshi was an important port, and the famous shrine there was worshipped by both sailors and poets, since the god of Sumiyoshi was seen as one of the gods of Japanese poetry.

The original prose has an almost incantatory quality: "Sumiyoshi county, Sumiyoshi village, Sumiyoshi beach" *(sumiyoshi no kohori, sumiyoshi no sato, sumiyoshi no hama),* giving a sense of praise to the local deity.

The poem too is particularly skillful: through the entire first half it appears to be a poem about autumn, but then turns right at the midpoint and becomes an encomium to spring and Sumiyoshi—a name that literally means "good to dwell." The "battle" between spring and autumn *(shunjū no arasoi)* has a long tradition in Japanese poetry.

69

Back then there was this man. He went to Ise Province as the Imperial Huntsman, and the Ise Priestess's mother let her daughter know that she should entertain him better than the usual envoy. The Priestess complied, that being her mother's wish. In the morning she saw him off to the hunt, and on his return in the late afternoon she brought him to her residence. All in all, she took perfect care of him. "Let's get together," he said to her on his second evening there. She wasn't that unwilling, but there were too many people around, and they couldn't.

As the senior huntsman, he was lodged quite near her. She waited till everyone was asleep and then, her room being close by, went to him just before midnight. He was lying down staring outside, unable to sleep, when she appeared in the dim moonlight, with a little girl before her. He led her joyfully to his bed, and there she remained from midnight until nearly three; then she left before they had said a single word to each other. He was too devastated to go back to bed at all.

As dawn approached he longed to know how she was, but he could hardly send anyone of his to find out. Instead he waited anxiously, until this came from her just after daybreak—only the poem, no more:

kimi ya koshi	Did you come to me?
ware ya yukikemu	Was it I who went to you?
omohoezu	I have no idea.
yume ka utsutsu ka	Did I dream it? Was it real?
nete ka samete ka[146]	Was I sleeping or awake?

Amid streaming tears he replied:

kaki-kurasu	Caught in the shadows
kokoro no yami ni	shrouding a heart in darkness,
madohiniki	I am too confused.
yume utsutsu to ha	Whether dream or fully real,
koyohi sadameyo[147]	make up your own mind tonight!

He sent it off and went out to hunt. For all his roaming the moors his heart was elsewhere, because he could think of nothing but meeting her again as soon as possible that night, once everyone was asleep. Unfortunately the Provincial Governor, who also ran the Priestess's household, learned of the Imperial Huntsman's arrival and kept a drinking party for him going all night. The man had no chance to get back together with her, and in the morning he was to leave for the province of Owari. In private he wept tears of blood, but no, he could not see her again.

Dawn was coming on at last when a cup of wine arrived from her, with a poem written on its dish. He picked up the dish and examined it.

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146. *KKS* 645, anon., "when Narihira no Ason went to Ise Province, he met in great secrecy with the lady who was serving as Ise Virgin. The next morning, as he was wondering how to manage without a messenger, he received this poem from the Virgin" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 144).

147. *KKS* 646, Narihira, "reply."

kachibito no You, who roam the land,
wataredo nurenu step untouched by any drop
enishi areba across little streams,

she had written. The poem had no ending. He wrote one on the dish with a pine torch ember:

mata afusaka no wherefore I will soon return
seki ha koyenan[148] over Come-Together Pass.

This Ise Priestess served during the reign of Emperor Seiwa. She was Emperor Montoku's daughter and a younger sister of Prince Koretaka.

An Imperial Huntsman *(kari no tsukahi)* was sent by the emperor to hunt in particular regions and offer the results of his hunt to the court. The Ise Shrine is the center for worship of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, seen as the ancestor of the imperial line. The Ise Priestess (Ise no saigū) was an unmarried female member of the imperial household, whose tenure at the shrine usually paralleled an emperor's reign. The fact that the Priestess's mother asked the Priestess to take especially good care of this envoy suggests some sort of relationship between the envoy and the Priestess's family. In fact, Ise Priestess Tenshi, daughter of Emperor Montoku, was born of Seishi, the daughter of Ki no Natora and sister to Narihira's father-in-law, Ki no Aritsune.

Did they or didn't they? Narihira and Tenshi spend three-and-a-half hours together in his bedroom yet, according to the text, "she left before they had said a single word to each other" *(mada nani-goto mo katarahanu ni kaherinikeri)*. Interpretations fall into three camps: (a) "don't be ridiculous—of course they had sex" (Katagiri and others); (b) the literal interpretation, that is, that they did not exchange vows, and therefore did not have sex (Takeoka and others); and (c) don't be so nosy *(Isei shō)*. Regardless, it is clear that readers close to Narihira's time all believed that the couple had had sexual relations. For example, Takashina no Naritada (d. 998) was the grandson of Moronao, who, as early as the mid-Heian period, was believed to be the offspring of Narihira and the Ise Priestess and to have been adopted by Takashina no Shigenori. This identification is

148. *KKRJ* 2929, "pledges *(chigiri)*."

apparent from an entry dated 1011.5.27 in the *Gonki*, the diary of Fujiwara no Yukinari (972–1027). Takehana Isao points out that Naritada had died only thirteen years before this entry was written.[149] By the time of *Eiga monogatari* (A Tale of Flowering Fortunes, ca. 1092), the affair between Narihira and Tenshi was considered a historical fact, and in the *Kojidan* (ca. 1212–1215) as well, Moronao is identified as their son.

There is fragmentary evidence for a distinct line of *Ise* texts that started with this episode and ended with the *Tenpuku-bon*'s Episode 11, the so-called "Imperial Huntsman line." The only text extant is a twenty-four-section fragment attributed to Ko-Shikibu no Naishi (d. 1025) and appended to the *Ōshima-bon*. Traditionally some scholars believed that this was the original version of the *Ise* and the reason for its title. Most contemporary scholars do not see the Imperial Huntsman line as the *Ur*-text, but they do believe that the content of this particular episode so stood out for readers that it ended up giving the entire collection its name.

Several scholars have noted similarities between this episode and the famous Tang-dynasty love story "The Story of Ying-ying" (Ying-ying zhuan). Katagiri, in fact, argues that the priestess's poem shows all the stylistic attributes of Narihira's work, suggesting that Narihira wrote the entire episode and all its poems. Interestingly, in the Chinese tale the woman appears suddenly in the night and makes love with the protagonist, and then leaves; and "the whole time she had not spoken a single word."[150]

149. Nihon Koten Bungakkai, *Den-Minbu no Kyō*.
150. Hightower, "Story of Ying-ying," p. 855.

70

Back then this man lodged at the Ōyodo Crossing on his return from serving as the Imperial Huntsman, and there he spoke this poem to one of the Ise Priestess's girl attendants.

mirume karu	Where is it, pray tell,
kata ya idzuko zo	that coast where sea-tangle grows?
sawo sashite	Dip the oar for me,
ware ni woshihe yo	that I too may learn the way,
ama no tsuribune[151]	sea-girl in your fishing boat.

The poem revolves around a number of pivot-words: *mirume*, a kind of seaweed, can also mean "chance to see"; *kata* can mean "coast" but also "direction" and "way" or "method"; *sasu* can be "to pole (a boat)" and "to point." The man is asking how he can see the one he longs for.

The overwhelming majority of commentators, past and present, see this episode as a continuation of the previous one. In fact, its connection to the previous episode exemplifies for Katagiri the process of accretion that characterizes what he sees as the third stage of the *Ise*'s development. Accordingly, the "girl attendant" *(warahabe)* here is seen by most as the same "little girl" *(chihisaki waraha)* of Episode 69.

Takeoka will have none of it. He insists that the episode be read independently of the previous one. The man is not asking how he can meet the Ise Priestess, but how he can meet the girl herself. This interpretation requires, of course, precisely that the "girl" of 70 not be the "little girl" of 69, and that we interpret *warahabe* not to be a female child (and thus inappropriate as a sexual object), but simply a female priestess *(miko)* of an adequate age who wears her hair in the *waraha* fashion.

151. *SKKS* 1080, Narihira.

71

Back then this man went to Ise as the Emperor's envoy to the High Priestess. One of the High Priestess's women was already flirting with him when she volunteered this plea:

chihayaburu
kami no igaki mo
koenubeshi

Any moment now,
straight across the mighty gods'
sacred palisade

ohomiyabito no I may go, eager to see
mimakuhoshisa ni[152] the man from the Great Palace.

The man replied:

kohishiku ha If you long for me,
kite mo miyo kashi come to me, sweet, by all means,
chihayaburu for those mighty gods
kami no isamuru never see fit to condemn
michi naranaku ni[153] the path that lies before you.

"Flirting" translates *"suki-goto ihi,"* in which *suki-goto* can mean either "amorous matters" or "amorous words"—the phrase is relatively unusual, and Mabuchi took it as the name of the girl, Sugiko.

The tantric *Ise monogatari zuinō* used this episode to expound the concept that one's own consciousness is a buddha/*kami,* a realization that is achieved by following the path of I-Se, that is, the sexual union of male and female. The *Zuinō* parsed *"chihayaburu"* (usually understood as a pillow-word [*makura-kotoba*] that modifies words such as *kami* [god]) and suggests "mighty") as follows:

> The phrase *chihayaburu* means "emerging from the womb"; it refers to the process by which the soul, having been conceived in a human form, is born. The form of the Five Viscera and Six Entrails of the mother closely resembles petals of the lotus flower. Conceived in the lotus, when born in the tenth month, the child emerges by tearing *(yaburu)* those thousand-petaled *(chi ha)* membranes. . . . Thus the phrase "chihayaburu kami" refers to the soul.[154]

This context yields the following translation for the man's poem: "If you are in love, pray come, for this is not a path forbidden by the thousand-petals-tearing kami," and the *Zuinō* comments:

> The "thousand-petals-tearing kami" *(chihayaburu kami)* is the human soul. Since this kami/soul is entirely I-Se, as it says in the

152. *ShSZS* 1400/1396, anon., "when Lord Narihira went down to Ise, [this came] from a lady-in-waiting of the Ise Priestess."
153. *ShSZS* 1401/1397, Narihira, "reply."
154. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 286.

> poem, how could the kami reject I-Se, particularly when Narihira was actually at Ise? The path referred to is the Path of Harmonious Union.[155]

Although such a tantric interpretation was not followed by later commentators, its influence remained. Kanera paraphrased the lower hemistich of the man's poem as: "The way of man and woman, beginning with Izanagi and Izanami no Mikoto, is not a way that is forbidden by the eight million gods."

A more secular reading suggests the nuance that the woman is worried not only about the gods, but also about her mistress's jealousy.

155. Ibid., p. 288.

72

Back then this man never managed to get back together with a woman in the province of Ise, and before leaving for the neighboring province he let her know just how much he held that against her. She replied:

ohoyodo no	The Ōyodo pine,
matsu ha tsuraku mo	waiting ever patiently,
aranaku ni	no, is not unkind;
uramite nomi mo	rather, the wave washes in,
kaheru nami kana[156]	looks, then, grumbling, withdraws.

Many medieval commentators took the girl of this episode to be the Ise Priestess from Episode 69. The poem relies on two pivot-words: *matsu,* meaning both "pine" and "to wait"; and *uramite,* meaning both "to grumble" and "to look at the beach" *(ura [wo] mite)*. Interestingly, a very similar poem, *Kokinshū* 626, is attributed to Narihira's grandson, Motokata (888–953).

156. *SKKS* 1432.

73

Back then his thoughts went to a woman he didn't dare write to, even though he'd found out where she was:

me ni ha mite Plain enough to see,
te ni ha torarenu yet forever out of reach:
tsuki no uchi no so, there in the moon,
katsura no gotoki stands the famous laurel tree,
kimi ni zo arikeru[157] and so, at your distance, you!

The first four lines of this poem are identical to a poem attributed in the *Man'yōshū* to a Prince Yuhara, which he sent to "a maiden":

me ni ha mite What shall I do with this woman
te ni ha toraenu like the *katsura* tree in the moon
tsuki no uchi no that my eyes can see
katsura no gotoki but my hands cannot touch?[158]
imo wo ika ni semu

Commentators as early as Shōhaku were aware of this connection and cited it as typical of the way Lady Ise, the author of this passage in their view, constructed her text *(rei no Ise ga tsukuri-monogatari no ishu nari)*.

The belief in a man in the moon, who tries to chop down an ever-reviving laurel tree (or cassia, *Cinnamomum cassia*) growing there, can be traced back to the ninth-century Chinese *Youyang zazu* (Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang) by Duan Chengshi (d. 863), which also contains the earliest Cinderella tale. However, the more relevant literary allusion seems to involve a poem by Lu Ji (J. Riku Shikō, 261–303) contained in the *Wen xuan,* "Imitating [the old poem] 'How Bright the Moon!'":

> Peacefully sleeping in a north-facing room,
> the bright moon enters my window.
> Evening rays overflow the room,
> but grasping, I cannot fill my hands.

157. *SCSS* 955/953.
158. Levy, *The Ten Thousand Leaves,* p. 294.

Takeoka suggests that since the man "didn't dare write," the poem is not actually addressed to the woman. He also insists that what is being compared is not the woman and the lunar laurel, but the laurel on the moon to the woman in her present location (*wonna no atari wo omohikeru;* lit., "he thought of the woman's whereabouts"). Nonetheless, early commentators all took the analogy to be simply between woman and celestial tree, Yūsai in particular praising it as a "truly fine comparison" *(makoto ni yoki tatohe nari)*.

74

Back then this man was furious with a woman:

ihane fumi — No steep crags to tread,
kasanaru yama ni — no range on range of mountains
aranedomo — stand across my path,
ahanu hi ohoku — yet I spend day after day
kohi-wataru kana[159] — wanting, always wanting you!

Like the previous episode, the poem here appears to be a reworking of a *Man'yōshū* verse (2422/2246):

ihane fumu — Although there are no
kasanaru yama ha — mountains, range on range, with their
aranedomo — steep rock to tread,
ahanu hi manemi — since many are the days we do not meet,
kohi wataru kamo — how I continue to long for you!

Virtually all commentators have taken the meaning of the two poems to be identical. Takeoka, however, points out the difference between the *Man'yōshū*'s *yama* ***ha*** *aranedomo* (lit., "although there are not any mountains") and the *yama* ***ni*** *aranedomo* in the *Ise* episode, which he insists should be read as "although you are not mountains. . . ." In other words, the poem compares the woman herself to a range of steep and forbidding mountains.

Otherwise, Watanabe Minoru associates Episodes 72, 73, and 74 with Episode 69, suggesting that the woman the man is bitter towards is in all cases the Ise Priestess.

159. *SIS* 969.

75

Back then this man told a woman that he wanted to take her to live with him in the province of Ise. She said:

ohoyodo no Seaweed sweet to see
hama ni ofu tefu grows along Ōyodo beach
miru kara ni they say: seeing you
kokoro ha naginu smoothes away all my heart's care,
katarahanedomo even without pillow talk

and encouraged him even less than before. He replied:

sode nurete Seaweed of the deep
ama no kari-hosu the fisherfolk cut and dry,
watatsu umi no sleeves dripping the while,
miru wo afu nite is sweet to see, but no more—
yamamu to ya suru[160] and you think of *me* that way?

She:

ihama yori So long seaweed springs,
ofuru mirume shi sweet to see, from teeming rocks,
tsurenaku ha as always before,
shiho hi shiho michi so long, flood or ebb the tide,
kahi mo arinan[161] shell I be glad to see you.

He retorted:

namida ni zo Bathed in the salt tears
nuretsutsu shiboru desolation wrings from me,
yo no hito no I keep wondering,
tsuraki kokoro ha Could this be your cruelty,
sode no shidzuku ka[162] trickling drops onto my sleeves?

She certainly was a challenge to get into bed.

160. *SCSS* 651/649, Narihira, "sent to a woman."
161. *SCSS* 652/650, anon., "reply."
162. *ShGSS* 699, Narihira.

The poems all rely on the pivot-word *mirume,* a kind of seaweed, and the verb "to see" *(miru).* The woman's second poem has been open to considerable debate. *Tsurenaku* can mean "heartless," but it was taken here to mean "unchanging," as in the unchanging green color of the seaweed. Commentators such as Kanera understood the woman to be comparing the man's feelings to the changing tides, citing a similar poem in *The Tale of Genji:*

chihiro to mo	How am I to know
ika de ka shiramu	whether a thousand fathoms
sadamenaku	measure your love, too,
michi-hiru shiho no	when the ever shifting tides
nodokekaranu ni	so restlessly ebb and flow? [163]

Teitoku, on the other hand, focused on the pivot-word *kahi,* meaning both "shells" and "results" ("shell I be glad" in our translation)—in Vos's: "If we continue / to see each other and nothing else; Then, just as there may be shells / Whether the tide is falling or rising, / There might even be some result / Whatever happens."

The mention of Ōyodo in the first poem immediately suggested to medieval commentators that the woman in the exchange was the Ise Priestess (see Episode 70). In fact, the *Nurigome-bon* gives the prose introduction as "because he was unable to meet again a woman who lived in the province of Ise. . . ." For Shōhaku, the episode demonstrated the Ise Priestess's morality: she had slept with Narihira for only one night, but had still become pregnant, due to her karma and the will of the gods. (Clearly this interpretation was influenced by Genji's relationship with Fujitsubo.) He and later commentators insisted that the resulting child had been adopted into the Takashina clan, which even until the present day (1477 in Shōhaku's case), was forbidden pilgrimage to the Ise Shrine.

163. Tyler, *Genji,* p. 170.

76

Back then, when the Nijō Empress was still known as the Mother of the Heir Apparent, she made a pilgrimage to her clan deity. The others were receiving their gifts when an aging gentleman serving in the Palace Guards took the occasion to accept his directly from her carriage. He gave her this poem:

ohohara ya	Noble Ōhara,
woshiho no yama mo	where the hill of Oshio
kefu koso ha	today of all days
kamiyo no koto mo	surely recalls with feeling
omohi-idzurame[164]	those times once known to the gods!

Was some sorrow troubling him, too? What can he have meant? It's impossible to say.

This poem is included in both the *Kokinshū* and *Yamato monogatari*. In the former, it is attributed to Narihira, with the headnote: "Composed on the day of a visit to Ōharano by the Nijō Empress [Takaiko] when she was still known as the Mother of the Heir Apparent."[165] Ōharano was the site of a shrine dedicated to Amenokoyane no Mikoto, the divine progenitor of the Fujiwara clan, who descended to earth with Ninigi no Mikoto, the ancestor of the imperial family. Despite the statement in the *Kokinshū,* there is no documentary evidence to attest to this visit.

In the *Ise,* the poet is called an "old man" *(okina)* and identified as a member of the Palace Guards *(konowe-tsukasa)*. Narihira became an Acting Lieutenant of the Left Palace Guards in 864, at the age of forty, and was promoted to Acting Captain of the Right Palace Guards, in 875, at the age of fifty-one (Japanese count). Takaiko was called "the Mother of the Heir Apparent" *(tōgū no miyasundokoro)* from 869 to 876. Most commentators seem to assume that the pilgrimage took place when Narihira was a Captain. However, Katagiri notes that the poet may be called *okina* here not so much because of his age as because of his function as the composer of a hymn of praise to the deity.

164. *KKS* 871, Narihira.
165. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 191.

Narihira's poem celebrates the combined good fortunes of both the imperial family and the Fujiwara clan, and it was presumably with this meaning that the poem was included in the *Kokinshū*. In the *Yamato monogatari,* on the other hand, the poem is made to refer clearly to the supposed affair between Narihira and Takaiko in the past. Katagiri claims that the *Ise* version is in the middle, with the poem functioning as one of praise but containing a subtext referring to Narihira's and Takaiko's relationship. The ambiguity, if there is any, comes from the adjective *kanashi*. While usually meaning "sad," in some cases it had the meaning of "moving," as in *Kokinshū* 1088:

michinoku ha	In Michinoku
idzuku ha aredo	the spots are various but
shiho-gama no	how touching the sight
ura kogu fune no	of them towing the boats that
tsunade kanashi mo	are rowed on Shiogama's bay.[166]

Taking the adjective this way, and paying particular attention to the line *woshiho no yama* ***mo,*** Takeoka suggests that the basic meaning of both the poem and the episode is, "the god is surely moved and I, the poet, too, am deeply moved."

166. Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart,* p. 416.

77

Back then there was a sovereign known as the Tamura Emperor. He had a consort named Takakiko. Takakiko passed away, and they held the funeral at Anjōji. People brought offerings, so many that they numbered a good thousand. Most attached their offerings to tree branches that they then planted upright before the temple hall, until wooded hills seemed to have moved there. Now, there was a gentleman named Fujiwara no Tsuneyuki, then the Right Commander. When the ceremony was over, he gathered poets together and had them make poems, in a spring mood, on the recent funeral. The aging Right Chief Equerry mistook the hills for real ones and wrote:

yama no mina	The hills, every one,
utsurite kefu ni	today have moved from afar
afu koto ha	to meet in this place
haru no wakare wo	because they lament, I know,
tofu to narubeshi[167]	so bitter a loss in spring.

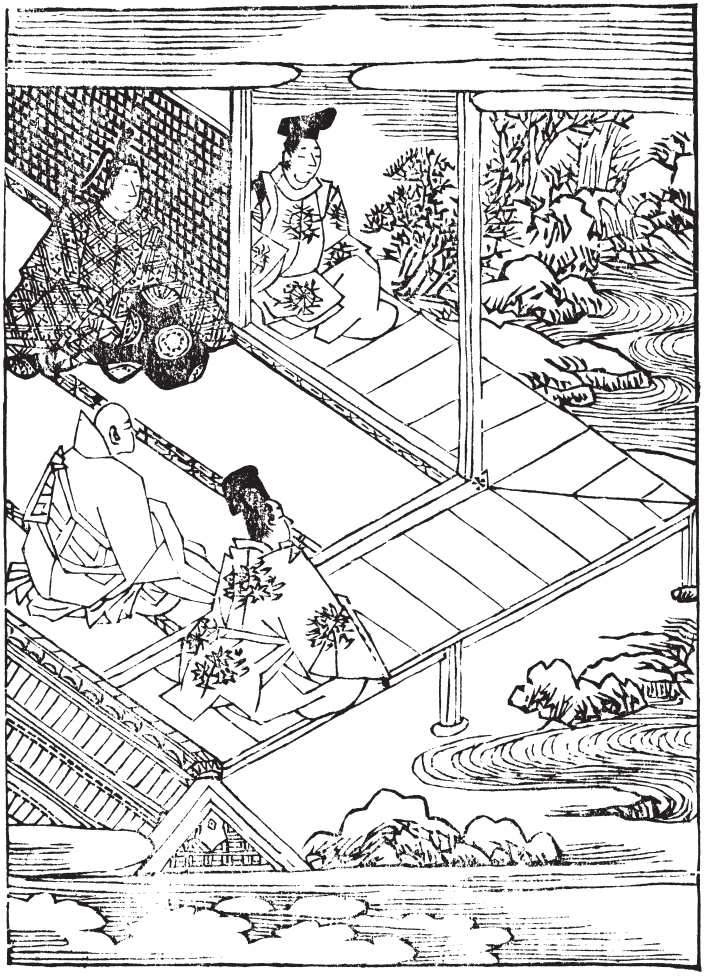
To a modern eye this is just no good. It touched everyone at the time, though—perhaps it was simply the best anyone there could do.

The Tamura Emperor is Montoku. Takakiko was the daughter of Minister of the Right Yoshisuke (813–867) and the granddaughter of Fuyutsugu. She died on the fourteenth day of the eleventh month of Ten'an 2 (858). Forty-ninth Day ceremonies should have been held on the second day of the first month of 859, but in this episode they have been moved to the last day of spring, that is, the thirtieth day of the third month.

Fujiwara no Tsuneyuki (d. 875) was Takakiko's elder brother. Narihira was made Chief Right Equerry in 865, at the age of forty-one. At the time of Takakiko's death he would have been thirty-three years old.

As in Episode 39, the poem here is based a scriptural verse that states that mountains cracked and collapsed at the time of the Buddha's death. The scholarly consensus is that the poem is criticized for being hyperbolic. Commentators such as Yūsai took the final words as Narihira's own assessment.

167. *KKRJ* 2483, Narihira; *ShGSS* 1258/1261, Narihira, "when Consort Takakiko had passed on, and they were doing the memorial events, he composed this poem on seeing the offerings the people had made."



78

Back then there was an imperial consort named Takakiko. She passed away, and the seven mortuary rites, one every seven days, were done at Anjōji. There was also a gentleman named Fujiwara no Tsuneyuki, the Right Commander. Tsuneyuki attended those rites, and when they were over, he stopped on his way home to call at the Yamashina residence of a cloistered Prince who'd arranged a very pretty stream with a waterfall.

"I have long been at your service from a distance," he said to the Prince, "but I have never waited on you in person. This evening I am at your disposal here." Pleased, the Prince had a room made ready for the night. Meanwhile, Tsuneyuki went to consult with his attendants. "I *must* make a special gesture," he said, "this first time I'm to wait on him. When His Majesty made a progress to my father Yoshisuke's Sanjō residence, someone gave my father a very beautiful stone from the beach at Chisato, in Kii Province. It arrived after the progress, so they put it in the brook before one of the rooms. His Highness might like a nice island for a garden pond. I'll give it to him." He sent some retainers to fetch it, and they brought it right away. It was even more beautiful than he'd been led to believe. What a shame it would be, though, he thought, to present it unadorned; so he had his men compose poems. They cut the Chief Right Equerry's into the green moss on the stone, like a poem inscribed in gold lacquer.

akanedomo	This most modest gift
iha ni zo kafuru	puts in terms of simple stone
iro mienu	thoughts invisible
kokoro wo misemu	that I could not otherwise
yoshi no nakereba	show you as I long to do.

For Takakiko and Tsuneyuki, see Episode 77. As in that previous episode, the dates and the historical figures indicated do not align. So, for example, Tsuneyuki did not become Right Commander until eight years after Takakiko's death. The cloistered prince (Yamashina no zenji no miko) was traditionally identified as Saneyasu (831–872), a son of Emperor Ninmyō, who took religious orders in the fifth month of 859, again after Takakiko's death. This discrepancy was first noticed by Kanera, but simply noted by him and later scholars, including Keichū. Azumamaro used the fact to insist that this person was simply a "creation of the writer's brush" *(sakusha no hitsugei)*. In the late eighteenth century, scholars such as Akinari and Doi Tsunehira (dates unknown) suggested a new candidate, Prince Takaoka, a half-brother of Narihira's father, Prince Abo. Takaoka was named Heir Apparent in 809, but was replaced after the Kusuko Incident (Kusuko no hen) of 810.

However, historical records confirm that it was the home of Tsuneyuki's father, Yoshisuke, that the Seiwa Emperor honored with a visit on the twenty-third day of the third month of 866. Regardless of who the prince is supposed to be, Katagiri points out that Narihira's poem likens Tsuneyuki's (and his own) feelings of loyalty to a former imperial prince—who has

renounced the world but maintained his elegance *(fūryū)*—to the immovable stone and to the green moss that seems to grow out of it. McCullough notes that the idea of engraving the poem in the moss can probably be traced back to Bo Juyi's well-known couplet:

> I burned the autumn leaves in the woods to warm my wine;
> I scraped the moss from rocks to form the letters of poems.[168]

168. McCullough, *Ise*, p. 235, n. 9.

79

Back then a Prince was born into the family. Everyone made a poem to celebrate the birth. This aging gentleman on the newborn's grandfather's side wrote:

waga kado ni	Now that we have shade
chihiro aru kage wo	a full thousand fathoms broad
uwetsureba	planted at our gate,
natsu fuyu tare ka	summer, winter, who of us
kakurezarubeki	need lack its gracious shelter?

The newborn was Prince Sadakazu. People said then that he was the Captain's son. His mother was the daughter of the Captain's elder brother, Middle Counselor Yukihira.

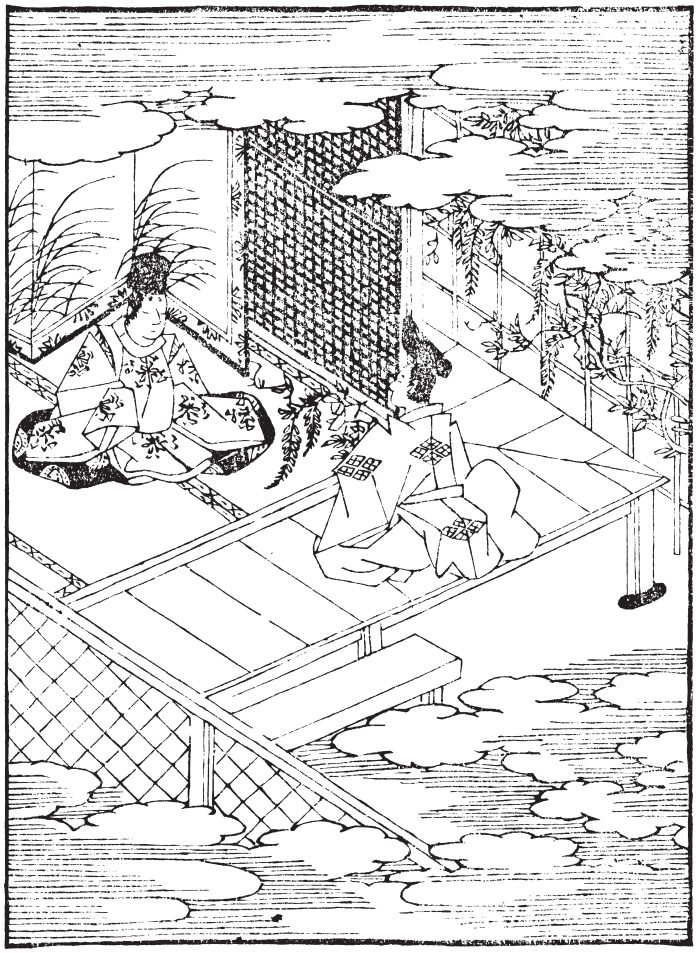
"The family" *(uji)* is the Ariwara. Prince Sadakazu was born to Ariwara no Fumiko in 875. Fumiko was a consort to Emperor Seiwa and the daughter of Yukihira, Narihira's older brother. As Katagiri notes, given the Fujiwara control of the court, there was little chance that this prince could be made emperor; nonetheless, the strengthening of ties with the imperial family through the birth was a cause for celebration among the Ariwara. As a maternal uncle, Narihira is called upon to compose a poem of celebration. Here again, he is referred to as "the old man" *(okina),* and Katagiri again insists that "congratulations [and] auspicious prayers are naturally the task of an old man."[169]

Manuscripts differ as to whether the poem concerns *kage* (shade) or *take* (bamboo), and scholars also differ as to which they think is "original" and which the textual "corruption." Takeoka argues that the last line *kakurezarubeki* ("who . . . need lack its gracious shelter?" lit. "who . . . will not be able to hide under it?") does not follow if the subject is "bamboo" rather than "shade," but this point is not apparent. He also admits that the expression "shade . . . planted" *(kage . . . uwetsureba)* is illogical, but claims this is a distinctive feature of Narihira's poetry, citing *KKS* 268, with the headnote "a poem planted and attached to a chrysanthemum" *(kiku ni musubitsukete uwekeru uta)* and *KKS* 622, which speaks of "nights that are even

169. Katagiri, *Kanshō,* p. 184.

wetter" *(yo zo hichi-masarikeru)*. Other scholars point to the metaphor of bamboo used for imperial princes in the *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian), and to the line "bamboo a full thousand fathoms broad" *(chihiro aru take)* in the *Shanhaijing* (*The Classic of Mountains and Rivers;* third century BC–first century AD). Takeoka, while accepting *kage,* paraphrases the line as "bamboo that makes shade a full thousand fathoms broad" *(chihiro mo aru kage o tsukuru take)*.

The comments after the poem were presumably added by a later redactor. It gives a rather nasty twist to the celebratory poem to suggest that it was actually Narihira who was the child's father. Most commentators simply see this addition as one that makes the episode conform to Narihira's later image as an irrepressible roué *(iro-gonomi)*. Takeoka's interpretation differs, however. He notes that the auxiliary verb *tsureba,* as it appears in poems from the *Kokinshū* and other contemporaneous texts, is always used in the first person (e.g., *oritsureba . . . ume no hana,* "because I plucked a spray of plum blossoms"), which would suggest grammatically that it was "the old man" (Narihira) who "planted" the bamboo. This, combined with the expression *waga kado* (lit, "*my* gate") and the forcefulness of the final lines' double-negative, yields, Takeoka argues, so enthusiastic a poem as to have led people at the time to wonder whether the child was not in fact Narihira's, and it is this gossipy speculation on the part of some at the time that the narrator is reporting.



80

Back then the gentleman at a house fallen on hard times had planted a flowering wisteria vine. On the last day of the third month, in pouring rain, he picked some and sent it off with this:

nuretsutsu zo In the soaking rain
shihite woritsuru I picked this nevertheless,
toshi no uchi ni for it came to me

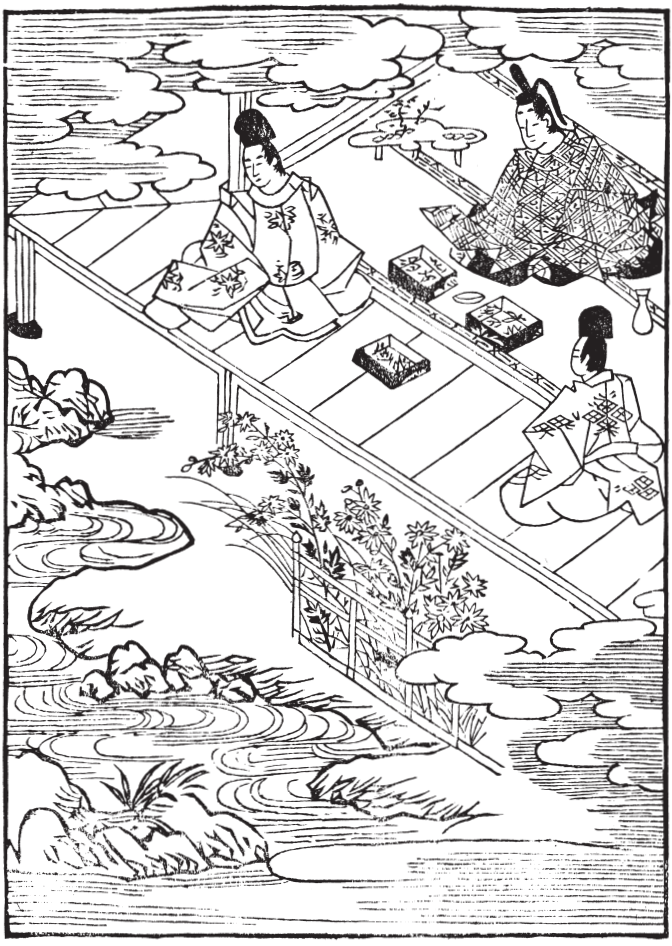
haru ha ikuka mo that this year there remain
araji to omoheba[170] so very few days of spring.

This poem, attributed to Narihira, appears as *KKS* 133, with the headnote "Sent [*tsukahashikeru*] to someone with a spray of wisteria blossoms, plucked in the rain on the last day of the Third Month *[tsugomori no hi*]." [171] The *Ise* headnote embellishes this statement by adding "a house fallen on difficult times" *(otorohetaru ihe)* and changing the "sent" to an extreme honorific *(tatematsurasu)*. Katagiri argues that the "house" is to be understood as the Ariwara family. Yūsai took it as Narihira's own home, though he noted that some read it as his brother Yukihira's, which would be more in line with Katagiri's interpretation. The wisteria *(fujhi),* then, represents the Fujiwara clan; indeed, Katagiri claims that suggesting that the man deliberately planted such a flower is "sarcastic" *(hiniku)*. As Takeoka notes, the questions of who this high-ranking Fujiwara personage might be, and what the object of Narihira's gift might be, have led to a plethora of suggestions: it is a love poem, or one of general flattery, or specific job-seeking. As McCullough writes: the "KKS poem is an expression of the elegant Heian sensibility," whereas in the *Ise* "the poem . . . takes on new overtones and illustrates a somewhat different aspect of mono no aware: 'At my humble house there is nothing of value except these flowers, which I have plucked for you, getting myself soaked in the process, in the hope that you may remember my plight and be moved to help me.'" [172] Yet, as Takeoka notes, in the *Kokinshū* at least, no poem but the present one uses the wisteria to symbolize the Fujiwara.

Earlier commentators were much more interested in the style of the poem. Shōhaku simply declared the poem's recipient no one of interest. Instead, commentators remarked on how the poem never actually mentions the rain, the wisteria, or the falling of the petals; and how rather than simply saying "Spring lasts only today" *(haru ha kefu nomi),* the poet states that "this year there remain / so very few days of spring" *(ikuka mo aruji)*.

More recent scholars, on the other hand, point to the similarity between this poem and a line by the Chinese poet Bo Juyi, giving the lie further to the interpretation of the *Sandai jitsuroku* that Narihira was "without Chinese learning" (see Introduction).

170. *KKS* 133, Narihira, see headnote in the commentary.
171. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 38.
172. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 236, n. 80.1.



81

Back then there was this Minister of the Left. He built himself a very nice house beside the Kamo River at Sixth Avenue, and there he made himself at home. Late in the tenth month, with the chrysanthemums at their farewell best and every leaf sporting its shade of autumn color, he invited the Princes to a gathering. Dawn came on after a night of drinking and music-making, and they made poems in praise of their host's residence. They were all done with the poems when an old beggar of a fellow who'd been roaming around below their viewing platform came up with this:

shihogama ni	When can it have been,
itsu ka kinikemu	I came to Shiogama?
asanagi ni	In the morning calm
tsuri suru fune ha	all the boats are out fishing—
koko ni yoranan[173]	oh that they would come my way!

The thing is, he'd been to the province of Michinoku and seen many exceptionally beautiful places there. The realm has sixty provinces and more, but there's nowhere else like Shiogama. That's why the old fellow praised the Minister's place by wondering in his poem when he could have come there.

The Minister of the Left was Minamoto no Tōru (822–895), a son of Emperor Saga (786–842, r. 809–823) reduced to commoner status. He was known as the "Riverside Minister" (Kawara Sadaijin) because of his residence, the Kawara-no-In, which he built on the banks of the Kamo River. (A poem by him appears in Episode 1.)

In some ways, this is one of the most difficult episodes to interpret. The first problem is the way in which the character, presumed to be Narihira, is referred to: *katawi wokina*. As Katagiri says, there is no way of avoiding the fact that this means "old beggar." However old Narihira might be at this point (and Tōru was only three years older than he), he was still the grandson of an emperor and a captain—how could he be referred to so disrespectfully? Medieval commentators tried to come up with other Chinese characters *(ateji)* that might "spell" /*ka-tai*/ such as "superlative form" or "representative poet." Other commentators suggested it was Narihira's own self-effacement, and in fact Katagiri, following his idea that the narrator of the *Ise* is a "dressed down" *(yatsushi)* manifestation of Narihira himself, concurs with this interpretation.

More problematic is the poem itself. The poems composed by the guests are meant to praise Tōru's residence by comparing it to something wonderful. The old man compares it to Shiogama. However, the Kawara-no-In was in fact designed specifically to look like Shiogama—sources report that Tōru had the lake regularly replenished with seawater and assigned servants to act as salt-makers. As Katagiri argues, to compare the Kawara-no-In to Shiogama and to act surprised by the resemblance is "idiotic"

173. *ShGSIS* 967/975, Narihira.

(bakabakashii). Although the source of the Kawara-no-In's design was well known, both Katagiri and Takeoka argue that, within this fictional episode, the reader is supposed to believe that Narihira was the first visitor to appreciate just how well Tōru's garden matched the actual locale. "That old man" *(kano wokina)* was qualified to do this precisely because "he'd been to the province of Michinoku and seen many exceptionally beautiful places there . . . but there's nowhere else like Shiogama," alluding to Narihira's supposed journey to Michinoku in Episodes 14–15 and 115–116. Curiously, while seemingly accepting this interpretation (that is, that Narihira is complimenting the host on how closely his garden resembles its model), Ishida Shōji interprets the second half of the poem to mean: "How I wish the boats that fish in the morning calm at Shiogama would come to this garden lake—if they did, then this garden would not differ from the real Shiogama in the least!"

82

Back then there was a Prince named Koretaka. He had a residence at Minase, beyond Yamazaki, and he went there every year in cherry-blossom time. He always took the Chief Right Equerry with him—I've forgotten the fellow's name, it was all so long ago. The Prince did some hawking, but his heart wasn't in it, and he spent his time instead drinking and making Japanese poems. The hawking took him to the Nagisa Lodge at Katano

when the cherry trees there were at their very best. Under the trees everyone dismounted, picked sprigs of flowers, and set them in their hair. Then all of them, high, middling, or low, made poems. This was the Chief Equerry's:

yo no naka ni If in all the world
taete sakura no there were of cherry blossoms
nakariseba no trace anywhere
haru no kokoro ha ah, how truly peaceful then
nodokekaramashi[174] spring would be for everyone!

Someone else came up with this:

chireba koso It's because they fall
itodo sakura ha the cherry blossoms seem to us
medetakere especially precious.
ukiyo ni nani ka What in this sad world of ours
hisashikarubeki lasts for any time at all?

They were starting back again from under the trees when the sun went down. The rest of the Prince's escort then arrived from across the fields, their servants carrying the wine. Off they all went to find a good spot to enjoy it. They came to a stream named Ama-no-kawa [River of Heaven]. The Chief Equerry poured for the Prince. "With my cup," His Highness declared, "I want from you a verse on the theme, 'On reaching the banks of Ama-no-kawa after hawking at Katano.'" The Chief Equerry gave him this:

kari-kurashi After the day's hunt,
tanabata tsu me ni the Tanabata lady
yado karamu shall lodge me tonight,
ama no kahara ni now that I have reached at last
ware ha kinikeri[175] the riverbank in the sky.

His Highness hummed it over and over, but he couldn't think of a reply. Ki no Aritsune, who was there too, answered for him:

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174. *KKS* 53, Narihira, "on seeing cherry blossoms at the Nagisa-no-In."

175. *KKS* 418, Narihira, "once when Narihira was on a hunting trip with Prince Koretaka, the party dismounted on the bank of a stream called Amanogawa [River of Heaven]. As they were drinking there, the Prince commanded Narihira to offer him a wine cup with a poem expressing sentiments appropriate for a hunter arriving at the River of Heaven" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 100).

hitotose ni All the long year through,
hitotabi kimasu once only he comes to her;
kimi mateba otherwise, she waits.
yado kasu hito mo No, I doubt that she will wish
araji to zo omofu[176] to give another lodging.

Back again at the Prince's residence, they drank and talked far into the night. Drunk, His Highness prepared to retire. The moon of the eleventh night was just then setting, too, so the Chief Equerry gave him:

akanaku ni Could it be the moon—
madaki mo tsuki no so welcome yet to every eye—
kakururu ka means to disappear?
yama no ha nigete If only the mountains' rim
irezu mo aranan[177] would shrink from it forever!

Ki no Aritsune replied for His Highness:

oshinabete How fine it would be,
mine mo tahira ni if only the mountain peaks
narinanamu would all lie so low,
yama no ha naku ha the rim of the range vanished,
tsuki mo iraji wo[178] and the moon never went down!

Prince Koretaka (b. 844) was the eldest son of Heir Apparent Michiyasu (later Emperor Montoku), born of Ki no Seishi, the daughter of Ki no Natora and the younger sister of Ki no Aritsune. Emperor Ninmyō died on the twenty-first day of the third month of 850, and Michiyasu became Emperor Montoku on the seventeenth day of the fourth month; but on the twenty-

176. *KKS* 419, Ki no Aritsune, "after the Prince had chanted Narihira's poem several times without hitting on a reply, Aritsune, who was one of the party, composed this" (ibid.).

177. *KKS* 884, Narihira, "once Narihira accompanied Prince Koretaka on an excursion. Back at their lodgings, the Prince's party drank and talked all through the night. When the eleven-day-old moon was about to set, the Prince, somewhat befuddled, prepared to retire, and Narihira composed this poem" (McCullough, *KKS*, p. 194).

178. *GSS* 1250/1249, Kanzuke Mineo, "on a moon-lit night, together with various friends."

fifth day of the eleventh month Korehito, born less than a month earlier, was appointed Heir Apparent, thus displacing not only the eldest son, Koretaka, but two other older brothers as well. He was appointed because he was the grandson of Fujiwara no Yoshifusa 804–872, Minister of the Right and the effective ruler of the country. When Korehito ascended the throne in 858 as Emperor Seiwa, Yoshifusa was appointed Regent, the first time this office had ever been filled by someone other than a member of the imperial family. In 872 Koretaka renounced the world and took the tonsure, establishing a retreat at Ono (see Episode 83). In other words, Prince Koretaka was a legitimate candidate for the throne, and the political fortunes of the Ki and Ariwara clans (Narihira was married to a Ki woman) rode on him. Those hopes were severely threatened by the appointment of Korehito as Heir Apparent in 850 and finally dashed when Korehito acceded to the throne in 858. It is not clear why Koretaka waited—or was allowed to wait—for fourteen years before removing himself as a contender by taking the tonsure.

The first part of Episode 82 shows Koretaka behaving as an ideal emperor, enacting the harmony between ruler and advisors *(kunshin waraku)* through the composition of poetry. As the Kana Preface to the *Kokinshū* says: "Whenever there were flowery spring mornings or moonlit autumn nights, the Emperors of past generations summoned their attendants and commanded them to compose poems suitable to the occasion."[179]

Yamazaki was an important port town on the eastern bank of the Yodo River. Minase was on the western bank, and the entire Yamazaki-Minase-Kitano area served as an imperial hunting ground. Nagisa Lodge, originally owned by Emperor Montoku, was then inherited by Prince Koretaka. *Nagisa* as a common noun refers to a place that is struck by waves from a river, ocean, or lake, and illustrations such as those in the *Saga-bon* show the party enjoying themselves on a shore.

It should be noted that, according to Katagiri, the inclusion of actual people's names ("Prince Koretaka"), the differences between the *Ise* text and the headnote for the poems as included in the *Kokinshū,* the pose of the narrator (thought to be the Chief Right Equerry himself, that is, Narihira), and the fact that in some textual lineages this first section appears as an independent episode, all suggest that this first section of Episode 82 was added to the original *Ise* text in the second stage of its development. In the second section, by contrast, the wording is very close to that of the *Kokinshū.* Likewise the last poem, here attributed to Aritsune, appears in the *Gosenshū* under the authorship of one Kanzuke Mineo and was appro-

179. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 5.

priated from that anthology. As McCullough notes: "This section illustrates most of the principal techniques employed by the IM author(s). An initial pair of poems is produced by judicious tinkering; a second pair is taken as a unit from KKS; a third pair is created by a skillful matching of two verses from different sources; and a partly or wholly fictitious context is provided for overall unity." [180]

180. McCullough, *Ise*, p. 238.

83

Back then Prince Koretaka took this old Chief Equerry with him, as usual, to go hawking at Minase. Some days later His Highness returned to the Capital. The Equerry prepared to leave again after seeing him home, but His Highness detained him in order to offer him wine and a due reward. Anxious to be off, the Equerry gave him:

makura tote I prefer for once
kusa hiki-musubu to bind myself no pillow
koto mo seji from wayside grasses;
aki no yo to dani unlike any autumn night,
tanomarenaku ni[181] this one will end all too soon.

The third month was nearly over. His Highness never went to bed, but stayed up all night. So went the Chief Equerry's service to the Prince, until, to his astonishment, His Highness shaved his head. In the first month the Equerry set off to Ono to present His Highness his respects. The place was on lower slopes of Mount Hiei, and the snow was very deep. At last he got through to the Prince's retreat and saluted him. His Highness was so bored and miserable that the Equerry stayed on with him for some time and regaled him with old memories. He wanted very much to wait upon him further, but his official duties forbade that. At dusk he therefore prepared to start back. He said:

wasurete ha Plain truth forgotten,
yume ka to zo omofu surely I must be dreaming!
omohiki ya Never did I think
yuki fumi-wakete I would one day, to see you,
kimi wo mimu to ha[182] struggle all the way through snow.

He wept the whole way home.

This episode clearly divides into two halves, with the first part serving as a kind of extension of the previous episode. The first half again shows Prince Koretaka's elegant lifestyle and the intimacy between himself and the aged Equerry (Narihira). Again the two end up drinking and composing poetry,

181. *KKRJ* 2424; *SCSS* 538, Narihira, "when together with Prince Koretaka as he was hawking, he made to return home, but still the Prince detained him, whereupon he composed the following."

182. *KKS* 970, Narihira, "in the days when Narihira attended Prince Koretaka, the Prince became a monk and went to live at Ono. Narihira set out to call on him there in the First Month. Since Ono was at the foot of Mount Hiei, the snow was very deep, but he managed to struggle to the hermitage, where he found the Prince looking bored and forlorn. After returning to the capital, he sent the Prince this poem" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 212).

but this time, in a reversal of the previous episode, it is the prince who wants to stay up, while the Equerry wishes to be allowed to go home.

Earlier commentators, however, interpreted the line about Narihira's "anxiety" *(kokoro-moto-nagari)* and his first poem quite differently. For them, Narihira is anxious because the prince seems preoccupied—he is contemplating taking the tonsure in reaction to losing his bid to be appointed emperor (see Episode 82). Narihira's poem, in this reading, is taken to mean that he will stay up with the prince.

The episode neatly divides mid-sentence: "So went the Chief Equerry's service to the Prince, until, to his astonishment, His Highness shaved his head." The first part refers to the good old days of elegant living and the second to the sudden shock of the prince's tonsure. Katagiri notes that stories about the conflict between Koretaka and Korehito for the throne can be found as early as *Heike monogatari* (The Tale of the Heike, 1331), which claims that horse races and a sumo match were held to determine which should become the next emperor. (Korehito wins only after the priest praying for his success dashes part of his brains out and uses them as an offering.)[183] However, Katagiri insists that the *Ise* is "a literature of love" *(ai no bungaku)* and that the sense of loss Narihira expresses in his last poem concerns not political power but the transience of time, life, and love. He repeats the anecdote told in the *Isei shō,* that the famous poet Gyōkō Hōin (1391–1455) invariably cried when he read this episode. In fact, Katagiri recommends that his own readers try reading the episode out loud, to see whether they, too, do not find themselves moved.

On the other hand, it was precisely the political interpretation of this episode that helped redeem the *Ise* in the eyes of Meiji-period scholars—Narihira was seen as a patriot who supported the legitimate candidate to the throne, against the usurpation of the Fujiwara regency.[184] As Tawara Machi notes, this episode is invariably included in school textbooks even today.[185]

183. See McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike,* pp. 260–261.
184. Mostow, "Modern Constructions," pp. 102–103.
185. Tawara, *Koi suru Ise monogatari,* p. 229.

84

Back then there was this man. He had no rank to speak of, but his mother was a Princess. She lived at Nagaoka. Her son, who was in service in the Capital, kept promising to visit, but often he just couldn't get there. She loved him very much, and besides, he was her only child. Then, in the twelfth month, a letter from her contained an urgent appeal. He read it with alarm and saw this poem:

oinureba With advancing age
saranu wakare no there comes, they say, a parting
ari to iheba nobody evades:
iyo-iyo mimaku and so, my boy, more and more,
hoshiki kimi kana[186] I simply long to see you.

At this he burst into tears and wrote:

yo no naka ni Oh that in this life
saranu wakare no no one ever had to face
naku mogana that certain parting,
chiyo mo to inoru in kindness for a son who prays
hito no ko no tame[187] his mother live a thousand years.

The man here is understood as always to be Narihira, whose mother was Imperial Princess Ito, a daughter of Emperor Kanmu (see Episode 58). Kanmu had moved the capital to Nagaoka in 784, about an hour's ride from the later capital of Kyoto.

One point of confusion is that it was well known that Narihira had a brother, Yukihira. However, due to records that appear to indicate that Yukihira did not go into mourning when Princess Ito died in 861, it may be that he was Narihira's half-brother. As Katagiri notes, this episode appears

186. *KKS* 900, Princess Ito, "when Narihira's mother, the Princess, was living at Nagaoka, her son was too busy with his court duties to visit her often. Around the Twelfth Month, someone came with a letter from her. It was a matter of the utmost urgency, the messenger said. When Narihira opened the letter, he found only this poem" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 197).

187. *KKS* 901, Narihira, "reply."

to come from the first stage of the *Ise*'s development (it appears in a near-identical fashion in the *Kokinshū*), and we should expect it to be more accurate about the details of Narihira's life than episodes from the later stages.

The point of the episode lies in the timing of the mother's message. In East Asia one became a year older at the new year. The "urgent appeal" *(tomi)* in the mother's letter has to do with the fact that at the end of the Twelfth Month she will be one year older, bringing that "parting no one evades" even closer.

85

Back then there was this man. The patron he'd served ever since he was a court page shaved his head. He visited this gentleman every New Year. He couldn't do so more often because he was in Palace service, but his devotion to him remained unchanged. Everyone who had served this patron in the past came calling, cleric or layman, and on this special New Year occasion the gentleman offered them wine. It snowed hard all day long. The drunken company made poems on the theme "Snowed in." This was the man's:

omohedomo Though keen to serve you,
mi wo shi wakeneba I cannot make two of me,
me karesenu which is why this snow,
yuki no tsumoru zo too deep now for me to leave,
waga kokoro naru[188] satisfies my fondest wish.

The Prince, deeply moved, took off a robe and gave it to him.

The prince and the man in this episode are of course taken to be Prince Koretaka and Narihira, following on from Episodes 82 and 83.

The first problem is that the man is said have served the prince "ever since he was a court page *(waraha).*" But Narihira was in fact nineteen years older than Koretaka, and he has been depicted as the older of the two in the previous episodes. Premodern readers simply changed the antecedant and took *waraha* as "child," with the reference now to Koretaka. Modern scholars reject this interpretation and see the matter as just more evidence of the fictional nature of the *Ise.* McCullough, citing both Mabuchi and Arai, claims "that much of the interest of *Ise monogatari* was considered to derive precisely from its combination of fact and fiction."[189]

The first two lines of the poem come from a verse collected in the *Kokinshū,* attributed to one Ikago Atsuyuki (VIII: 373):

Composed and sent to someone leaving for the provinces

omohedomo Though I long to go, too,
mi wo shi wakeneba I am powerless to split

188. *KKRJ* 723.

189. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 239, n. 1; citing Arai, *Hyōshaku Ise monogatari taisei,* pp. 738, 742.

me ni mienu myself asunder,
kokoro wo kimi ni so your companion must be
taguhete so yaru the hidden heart I send.[190]

Takeoka suggests that readers would have appreciated the *Ise* poem as a clever adaptation. He notes that there are various interpretations of the third line of the *Ise* poem, *me karesenu*. Among modern-day scholars, interpretations divide mainly into those who take it to mean "like this accumulating snow from which I cannot turn my eyes" (*me kara hanarenai kono sekisetsu no yō ni,* Ōtsu Yūichi); or "'which does not go out of sight', hence 'which does not stop'" (Vos), referring to the falling snow. Takeoka finds little evidence for these readings and offers another interpretation: "thanks to the great accumulation of snow, I 'do not remove my eyes' from the prince's side, but am [able to be] with him all day."

190. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 89.

86

Back then this very young man was seeing a young woman. They broke it off for fear of their parents, but he must still have wanted her, because years later he gave her a poem:

ima made ni	After all this time
wasurenu hito ha	anybody else, I know,
yo ni mo araji	would have forgotten,
wono ga sama-zama	so many years have gone by
toshi no henureba[191]	while we went our separate ways.

That was as far as it went. Both were serving together in the same household.

The translation presents the standard interpretation of this very difficult-to-interpret episode. One problem is the phrase *kokoro-zashi hatasamu*—usually understood as "intended to achieve his/her desire" ("but still he must have wanted her" above), with the referent usually taken as the man, but sometimes the girl (on the basis of variant readings in the *Nurigome-bon* and others[192]). Yet it is then curious that "that was as far as it went" *(yaminikeri),* though this might be thought due to the fact that "both were serving together in the same household."

Takeoka offers what seems to be a novel interpretation. It is in fact because, after years apart, that the former lovers find themselves working in the same princely household that the man sends the woman a letter. Yet the purpose of this letter is not to revive the relationship, but to "bring it to a conclusion" *(ketchaku o tsukeru),* since it did not end but was rather interrupted in the past. Mentioning the fact that they now see each other every day only at the end, Takeoka suggests, would certainly make readers wonder whether in fact things did end so simply and leave them curious to hear more. In this interpretation, the man's poem would be rendered along the lines of "Certainly there is no one in the world (myself included) who would not have forgotten after all this time. . . ."

191. *SKKS* 1365.
192. Vos, *A Study,* II: 137.

87

Back then this man had property in the village of Ashiya, in Ubara County of Settsu Province, and he went to live there. This Ashiya is the one in the old poem:

ashinoya no Boiling down salt brine
nada no shiho yaki beside Ashiya-on-Sea
itoma nami left so little time
tsuge no wogushi mo to put the box comb in my hair,
sasazu kinikeri[193] I gave up, but here I am!

Ashiya-on-Sea, the place was called. The junior officers of the various corps of Palace Guards gathered there because the man sometimes served at the Palace. His elder brother was an Intendant of the Watch. They were amusing themselves beside the sea, right in front of the house, when someone said, "There's supposed to be a Nunobiki Waterfall up in these mountains—let's go and see it!" Up they climbed. The waterfall was quite something. White silk seemed to cover a rock face two hundred feet high and fifty feet wide, and a rock as big as a round straw cushion jutted from the lip of the falls. The water rushing over it fell in drops the size of tangerines and chestnuts. The man called on everyone to make poems about the waterfall. The Intendant of the Watch produced his first:

waga yo woba My day: will it come
kefu ka asu ka to today, perhaps tomorrow?
matsu kahi no Anxious waiting brings
namida no taki to only tears, streaming from heights
idzure takaken[194] to rival this waterfall.

nuki-midaru Somebody up there
hito koso arurashi must be scattering loose pearls,
shiratama no for gleaming jewels
ma naku mo chiru ka drop in an unbroken stream
sode no sebaki ni[195] on these narrow sleeves of mine.

193. *SKKS* 1588, Narihira.
194. *SKKS* 1649, Yukihira, "on going to see Nunobiki Falls."
195. *KKS* 923, Narihira, "composed when a group of people were reciting poems at the foot of Nunobiki Falls."

This one must have tickled the others. They praised it and gave up making any of their own.

It was a long way back, and the sun went down as they came to the house of Mochiyoshi, the late Lord of the Imperial Household. Looking ahead to their host's place, they saw the sea there dotted with fishermen's fires. Their host made this poem:

haruru yo no	Are those, I wonder,
hoshi ka kahabe no	stars on a cloudless night,
hotaru ka mo	fireflies by a stream,
waga sumu kata no	or the fires the fishermen
ama no taku hi ka[196]	light at sea off my home shore?

196. *SKKS* 1589, Narihira.

Then they were home at last. A southerly wind blew that night, and the waves were very high. First thing the next morning, the little girls of the household collected the *miru* seaweed washed up by the waves and brought it back to the house. The women sent it over on a high-stemmed dish, under an oak leaf with this written on it:

watatsumi no	Upon you, my lord,
kazashi ni sasu to	the god of the ocean deep,
ihafu mo mo	ever liberal,
kimi ga tame ni ha	has lavished the seaweed
woshimazarikeri	he loves to put in his hair.

How about that for a country poem? Will it do, or does it still have some way to go?

The first half of this episode seems to come from the same brush as Episode 33, which was also set in the Mubara district of Settsu. Katagiri suggests that Narihira may well have had property there.

The "old poem" is identical to *MYS* 278, except for the first line and a half *(shiga no ama ha / me-kari),* but this change transforms a third-person description of the fisherwomen into a first-person declaration of impatient love.

Both Narihira and his older brother, Yukihira, served in the imperial guards. The man's service is called *nama-miya-dzukae*—some of the ambiguities of the term *nama* were discussed in connection with Episode 1. Interpretations here include "a new position at Court" (Vos); nominal service that entailed no real work (Uesaka Nobuo); a tone of modesty and humility (Katagiri); a post too low to be significant (hence related to his later poem); or lack of real interest in the job.

The phrase *iza, kono yama no kami ni ari to ifu nunobiki no taki* ("[Say,] There's supposed to be a Nunobiki Waterfall up in these mountains") was read by the Reizei school as "Isago no Yama," and as such was incorporated into later poetic compositions, such as the following by Fujiwara no Moto'ie, contained in the *Fuboku waka shū:*

ashinoya no	When I climb
isago no yama no	the headwaters of
minakami wo	Mount Izago
noborite mireba	in Ashi-no-ya and look, I see
nunobiki no taki	Nunobiki Falls!

The second poem is attributed to Yukihira in the thirteenth-century *ShinKokinshū,* mostly likely on the strength of this episode. It contains two pivot-words in the phrase *matsu kahi no namida,* where *kahi no na* means "no result" and *kahi* and *namida* alone mean "ravine" and "tears," respectively. Narihira in his poem compares the water drops to jewels, which the sleeves of his low-ranking court robe are too narrow to catch. Like the previous poem, it is usually taken to be a complaint about lack of preferment at court. No one tries to compose any more after this poem, believing it cannot be topped. Katagiri seems unique in taking the rhetorical question as expecting a negative reply: "Must the men beside him have thought it an expression to laugh at? They did not, and sympathizing with this poem, they themselves quit composing." [197]

197. Katagiri, *Kanshō,* p. 211.

The second half of the episode is clearly by a later hand, as indicated by a stylistic difference apparent in the original. Who Mochiyoshi was is unclear. Katagiri notes that no fictitious names appear in the *Ise,* and many scholars identify him with Motoyoshi (as the name is in fact written in the *Nurigome-bon* and other textual lineages), a known poet. Watanabe Minoru suggests that the fireflies are to be taken as the deceased man's spirit (cf. Episode 45).

In the *Kokinshū* era, flowers and leaves were stuck in one's hair not just for decoration, but so that their spirit should contribute to one's own long life:

tsuyu nagara	Let us deck our heads
worite kazasamu	with dewy chrysanthemums,
kiku no hana	plucking the blossoms
oisenu aki no	that we may always enjoy
hisashikarubeku	autumns of eternal youth.[198]

The oak leaf mentioned probably had the same significance. The woman imagines that the sea god must follow the same custom with seaweed, especially since the Chinese characters used for "seaweed" are "ocean pine," and the evergreen pine, too, is a symbol of longevity. While granting the woman good taste, Katagiri insists that her poem is "a little tangled" *(sukoshi hikkaruru),* and suspects that it was originally written as a love poem. Nonetheless, he suggests that the question at the end is the narrator (understood to be Narihira) expressing diffidence towards a poem composed not by his "proper wife" *(seisai)* but by his "local wife" *(genchisai).*

198. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 67.

88

Back then a group of friends, no longer that young, gathered to watch the moon. One of them:

ohokata ha	On balance I see
tsuki wo mo medeji	no reason to praise the moon:
kore zo kono	yes, there's the one
tsumoreba hito no	who comes round and round again
oi to naru mono[199]	month by month to make us old.

Debate centers on the various meanings of the first line *(ohokata ha)*. The English translations alone include, "As a general thing" (Vos); "Lovely as it is, / The moon will never win my praise" (Brower & Miner[200]); "As a general thing" (McCullough, *Ise*); and "In the end" (Rodd). Both Vos and McCullough insist that the underlying meaning is, in the latter's words: "On this autumn night, emotion overcomes reason; against my better judgment, I delight in the full moon's beauty."[201] Takeoka's paraphrase seems to suggest the opposite: "(From now on,) seen from a broader point of view, I will not unthinkingly praise the moon, [since] it is this very moon, indeed, that is the thing that makes us old as it makes its rounds."

199. *KKS* 879, Narihira.
200. Brower and Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry,* p. 162.
201. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 241.

89

Back then a man of quite respectable rank had been in love for years with a lady well above him.

hito shirezu	Were I, all unknown,
ware kohi-shinaba	to die of unhappy love,
ajhikinaku	what god, I wonder,
idzure no kami ni	would everyone single out,
naki na ohosen[202]	quite wrongly, for unfair blame?

The *hito* of *hito shirezu* can be taken two different ways: to refer to people in general ("unknown to others") or to the lady herself. The former seems the dominant interpretation, while Takeoka insists on the latter. He further suggests that the phrasing of the headnote indicates that the lady's rank is comparable to that of the Ise or Kamo Priestess. *Ajhikinaku* is "pointlessly, to no avail," and modifies both verbs: "to die pointlessly of love" and "to blame pointlessly."

202. *SShKKS* 1157, Narihira, "sent to a woman."

90

Back then he was trying everything to get somewhere with a woman who refused to respond. She must finally have taken pity on him, because she said, "All right, then, tomorrow, with a curtain or something between us." Although delighted, he also had his doubts; so he sent her this, tied to a prettily flowering cherry branch:

sakura-bana	Ah, cherry blossoms!
kefu koso kaku mo	Today, yes, you do indeed
nihofu to mo	smile upon me,
ana tanomigata	but I know I cannot count
asu no yo no koto	on the same tomorrow night.

No wonder he felt that way.

The central metaphor of the poem is clear; the surrounding prose less so—in fact, the episode is one single, long sentence. The man's poem compares the woman to beautifully blooming cherry blossoms, the flower that most symbolized unreliability: the blossoms bloom today, but may have been swept away by wind or rain the next day.

In the Heian period adult men and women, unless related as parent and child or husband and wife, usually spoke to each other with a blind or curtain hanging between them so that the man would not be able to look at the lady directly.

Takeoka insists that the verb *tsukete* before the poem does not mean that the man attached the poem to the branch and sent it to the woman, rather he insists that the man simply "approaches" the flowers and that the poem is a soliloquy *(doku'ei)*.

91

Back then it saddened this man just to see the months and days go by, and he wrote as the third month reached its close:

oshimedomo	All passing breathes loss
haru no kagiri no	but, ah, that the last of spring
kefu no hi no	should come on this day,
yufugure ni sahe	and this day, too, slip away
narinikeru kana[203]	into the failing twilight!

The poem appears as an anonymous composition in the *Gosenshū*. Medieval commentators were unanimous in reading the episode and poem in the *Ise* as concerned with love. As Yūsai put it, "Today, too, he does not meet her; this month, again, they do not meet; he sighs at the passing days and months." Teitoku claimed that it was the context of the *Ise* that turned the *Gosenshū* verse into a love poem. Azumamaro, in the eighteenth century, seems to have been the first to insist that the poem remained one unconnected to love even in the *Ise,* an interpretation with which Takeoka agrees, citing other *Kokinshū* poems that mourn the passing of time (*KKS* 896, 897, 898).

203. *GSS* 141, anon., "topic unknown."

92

Back then, desire kept this man going off time after time to a woman's place, then home again, but in reality he couldn't even get a letter to her.

ashibe kogu
tananashi wobune
iku so tabi
yuki-kaheruran
shiru hito mo nami[204]

Ah, how many times
must my little, open boat,
rowing through the reeds
find a way to her and back,
and she never even know?

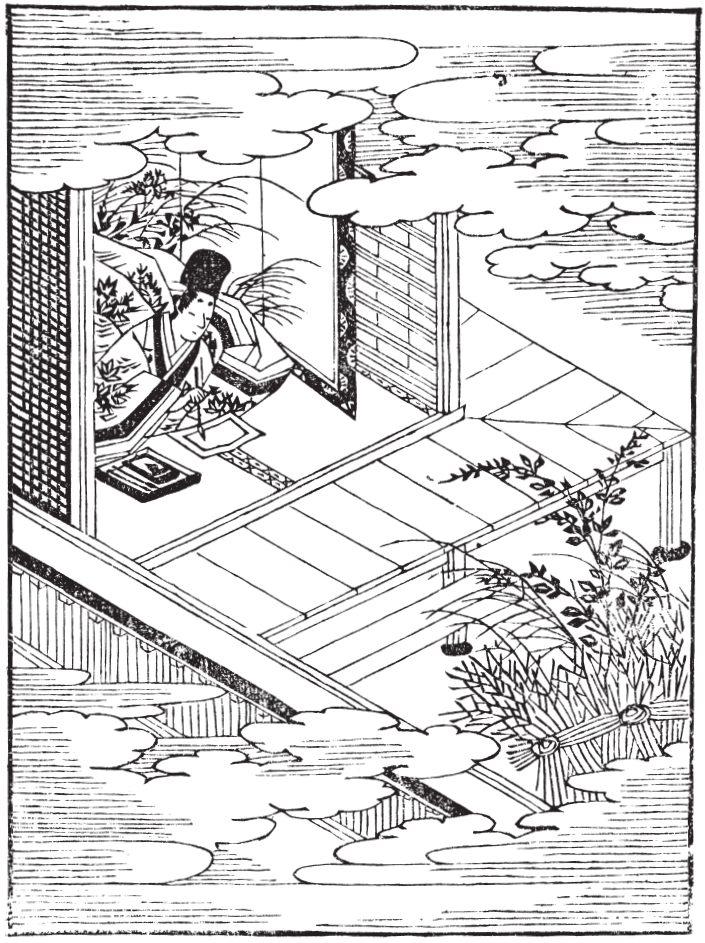
A *tananashi wobune* is a small boat with no planks attached for the boatman to stand on while poling. The word appears in *Man'yōshū* 58, by Takeji no Kurohito (fl. 686–707):

idzuku ni ka
funahate suramu
are no saki
kogi-tami-yukishi
tananashi wobune

Where along the shore
Will it find a mooring for the night,
The tiny open boat
That rowed away around the coast
Of the headland of Are?[205]

The distinctive feature of the *Ise* poem is its last syllable, *mi.* The last line, *shiru hito mo na,* means "there is no one at all who knows" and–*mi* indicates a reason or cause: "how many times must I come and go, ***because*** she still never knows?"

204. *GSS* 141, anon., "topic unknown."
205. Cranston, *A Waka Anthology,* I: 260.



93

Back then this nobody had his heart set on a woman of supreme distinction. He must have had some tiny reason to hope because he longed for her sleeping, he longed for her waking, and in the extremity of his longing he wrote:

afuna afuna	Love, if love you will,
omohi ha subeshi	only someone your equal:
nasohe naku	for the yawning gulf

takaki iyashiki	between the lofty and the low
kurushikarikeri[206]	yields nothing but suffering.

This kind of thing must have been common enough then, too.

The first line of the poem has long caused confusion, even as to how it should be pronounced: */afuna afuna/*, */ōna ōna/*, or even */abuna abuna/*. The last of these would mean "fearfully," or "timidly." Some medieval scholars such as Yūsai thought it meant "courteous" or "intimate." Others insisted it was the same words as *ohona ohona,* which appears in *The Tale of Genji* and means "as much as possible" or "with all one's effort." Modern scholars agree that the expression means "according to one's station."

206. *KKRJ* 2114, anon.

94

Back then there was this man. For one reason or another he moved out of his woman's house. She got herself another man, but she and the first one had a child, so they kept in touch even though they were no longer close. Since she painted, he sent her a robe to paint. A couple of days then went by while she failed to return it because, she said, her new man was around. He really resented this. "You haven't yet done what I asked," he said, "and I understand why, but I'm still beginning to hold it against you"; and he got in a dig at her with this poem. It was autumn.

aki no yo ha These fall nights of yours
haruhi wasururu sweep away all memory,
mono nare ya it seems, of spring days—
kasumi ni kiri ya autumn fogs being, I see,
chihe masaruran[207] so much thicker than spring mists.

She replied:

chijhi no aki Would I dare compare
hitotsu no haru ni autumns by endless thousands
mukahameya to one single spring?
momijhi mo hana mo Red leaves and cherry blossoms
tomo ni koso chire nonetheless fall, both of them.

In the Heian period's uxorilocal marriages, the man often lived with his wife at her parent's home. Based on two episodes from the *Tales of Yamato* (*Yamato monogatari,* episodes 159–160), medieval commentators identified the woman in this episode as the daughter of Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Yoshisuke (813–867; see Episode 77) and the second husband as Minamoto no Yoshiari (845–897), the fifth son of Emperor Montoku.

The poems revolve around the age-old debate over whether to prefer spring or autumn, in the first poem represented by "autumn fog" *(kiri)* and "spring mists" *(kasumi)*. Since Narihira was twenty years older than Yoshiari (and the grandson of an emperor, rather than a son), it would have been rather dubious for him to use spring to represent himself and assign Yoshiari to autumn. On the other hand, as the prose states, the episode is set in autumn.

207. *KKRJ* 2875.

95

Back then this man served the Nijō Empress. He and one of her gentlewomen saw each other often, and he was always after this woman to get something going between them. "I'd really like to spend some time with you, with a curtain between us if you prefer, so I can explain a little of the way I feel about you," he said; so she agreed to do that, very secretly. While they were talking, he:

hikoboshi ni	This ardor of mine
kohi ha masarinu	far outburns the Herdboy Star's.
ama no kaha	River in the Sky,
hedatsuru seki wo	whatnots in the suitor's way,
ima ha yamete yo	all that rot: just give it up!

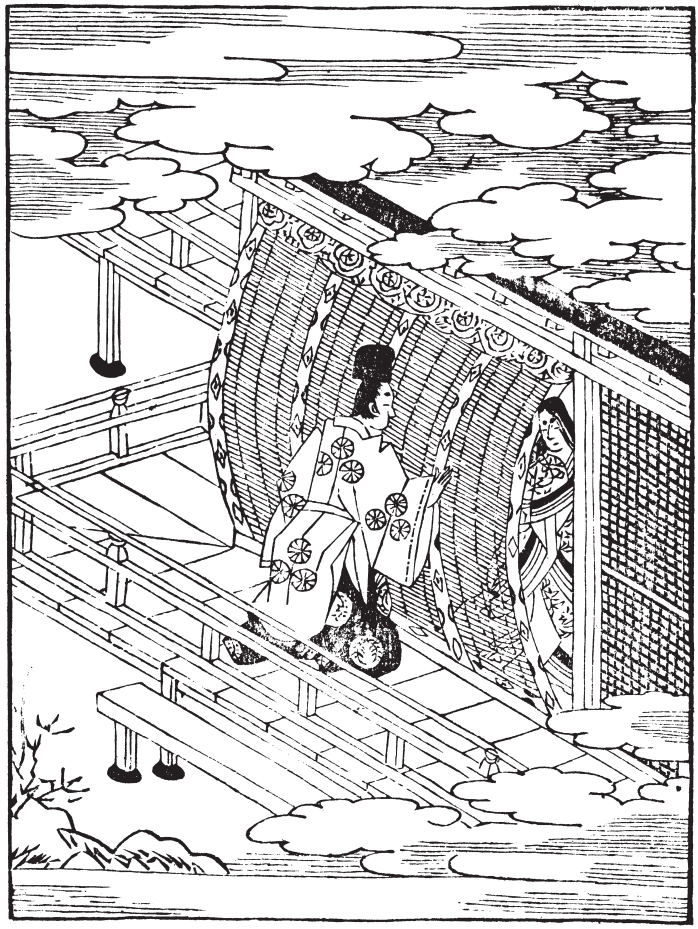
She liked that one a lot. They got together.

It was not uncommon for women to talk to men through curtains or blinds. In premodern commentaries, the man was of course identified as Narihira. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* tradition identified the woman as Lady Ise and the time as before Narihira's marriage to Aritsune's Daughter.

It is precisely because of the man's poem that the woman lets him sleep with her. In his commentary, Yūsai called to mind the famous phrase from the *Kokinshū* Kana Preface: "[Japanese poetry] brings harmony to the relations between men and women." [208] Orikuchi Shinobu called the poem "vulgar" *(zokuppoi),* but one that might have actually been used as seen in this episode.[209]

208. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 3.

209. For further discussion of this episode and its thirteenth-century illustration, see Mostow, "Female Readers," pp. 170–171.



96

Back then there was this man. He'd been after a woman for months, and she, being neither stock nor stone, must have felt for him, because by and by she grew fond of him. At the sixth month full moon she broke out in a few boils. She told him, "I'm all yours. I have a couple of boils, though, and it's very hot right now. I promise I'll be with you when there's some autumn in the wind." With autumn coming on, people began to argue over whether or not she'd soon be moving in with him; then suddenly her older brother came

for her. She asked for a leaf in first autumn color. Then she made a poem and wrote it on the leaf, to go to him:

aki kakete	No autumnal cool
ihishinagara mo	colors what I told you then,
aranaku ni	weakening my words;
ko no ha furi-shiku	but the leaves fall from the trees,
e ni koso arikere[210]	carpeting our dwindling stream.

"Give this to anyone they send over from there," she said. Then she went away. After that, and to this very day, no one knows what happened to her. Did things go well for her? Did they go badly? Where she went is a mystery, too. Apparently the man lifted his hands above his head, fingers stretched skyward, in a gesture to curse her. Scary! Does a curse really work? Does it do nothing? "He'll soon find out," people said—so the story goes.

The expression "being neither stock nor stone," a common one in Japanese literature, explains a woman's eventual capitulation to a man. *Ise* commentators generally cited a passage by Bo Juyi: "men are not wood or stone, all have feelings."

"With autumn coming on" translates *aki tatsu korohohi ni.* This follows the variant *Takeda-bon,* while the *Tenpuku-bon* has *aki matsu korohohi ni,* or "as he/she waited for autumn," written from the viewpoint of the man and/or woman. There are apparently disputes within the girl's family about the appropriateness of her moving in with (and marrying) the man. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* of course took the mention of a brother (rather than a father) to link this episode back to Episode 6 and the Nijō Empress Takaiko.

The *e* of the woman's poem is usually taken to mean "stream" and also *en,* or "relationship." Since the falling *(furi-)* leaves blanket *(shiki)* the stream, the stream must be shallow, as the couple's relationship *(en)* has proven to be. Takeoka offers a radically new interpretation that understands *e* as "branch" *(eda)* and the latter half of the poem to mean that, just as the autumn wind has started to blow, the couple are separated like an autumn leaf from the branch.

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210. *SCSS* 736/734, "Sent to Lord Narihira when, having promised to meet with him in autumn, there was a reason that she could not meet."

The man issues his curse with a "reverse-hand clapping" *(saka-te wo uchite)*. It is not clear what this entailed, but premodern commentators refer to Book One, Chapter 44 of the *Kojiki,* where Hiko-hoho-demi subdues his older brother in part by using this gesture.[211]

The most common problem in interpreting classical Japanese texts is deciding where a quotation stops and starts (there were no quotation marks in classical Japanese). The impact of this problem on the interpretation of the last lines of this episode can be seen in the variety of English translations: "'We shall soon learn,' he said, 'whether one human being has the power to injure another through curses'" (McCullough); "The curses wrought by others—are they carried out or sloughed off? It was said: 'Now we shall see!'" (Harris[212]). Finally, Takeoka seems to see the curse as directed toward the brother and the man's final words as his resolution to meet with the woman in the future.

211. Philippi, *Kojiki,* p. 154. See also Naumann, "*Sakahagi.*"
212. Harris, trans., *The Tales of Ise,* p. 138.

97

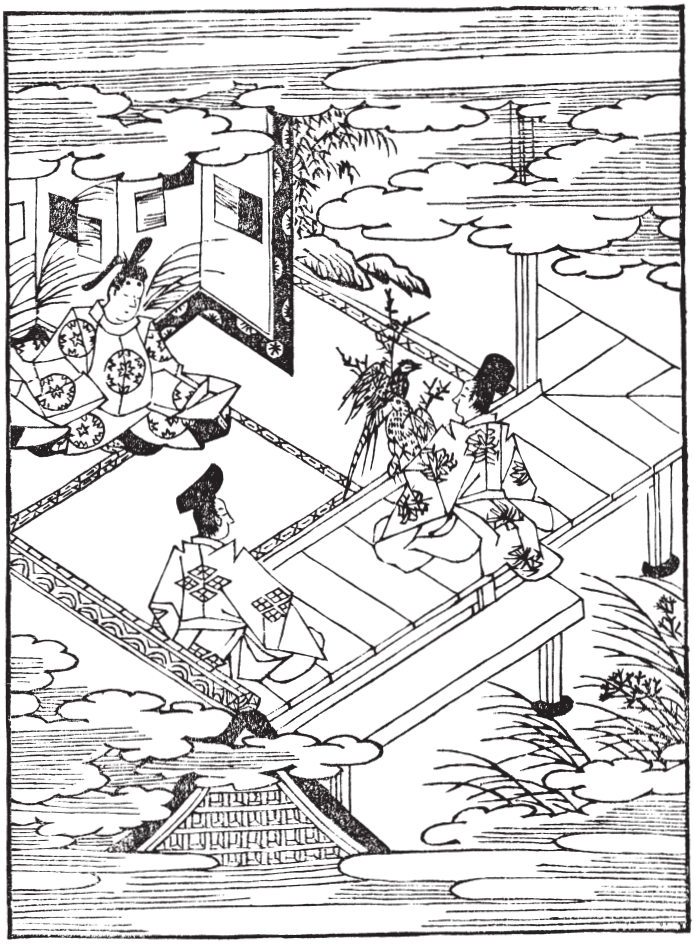
Back then there was a gentleman known as the Horikawa Minister. On the day of his fortieth jubilee, celebrated at his Kujō residence, an old Captain in the Palace Guards gave him this:

sakura-bana O cherry blossoms,
chiri-kahi-kumore scatter drifting petal clouds,
oiraku no veil from every eye
komu to ifu naru the path whence old age, they say,
michi magafu ga ni[213] must come at last to take us.

The Horikawa Minister was Fujiwara no Mototsune, whom we first saw by name in Episode 6 in the guise of the demon who swallowed the Nijō Empress Takaiko in one gulp. His fortieth birthday fell in 875, the year when Narihira was appointed Captain of the Palace Guards at the age of fifty. Both Katagiri and Takeoka insist that Narihira is called an "old man" *(okina)* here because of his celebratory role (see Episode 81). However, in this period the age of forty was known as *shorō,* or "the beginning of aging," and so fifty was definitely "old."

This poem is taken almost directly from the *Kokinshū*. Again, both Katagiri and Takeoka note how unusual a poem it is for a celebratory verse: no references to ever-green pines, or long-lived cranes or turtles; the poet uses instead one of the chief symbols of transience—the falling cherry blossoms—and calls on them to scatter like clouds so as to hide the road down which an equally personified old age is said to come. The poem was highly prized by both Shunzei and Teika. In the *Nurigome-bon* the poem is said to have been composed for a painting on a screen, which were often used in birthday celebrations.

213. *KKS* 349, Narihira, "composed when there was a fortieth-year celebration for the Horikawa Chancellor [Mototsune] at the Kujō Mansion" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 84).



98

Back then there was a gentleman known as the Chancellor. In the ninth month a retainer of his presented him with this, together with a pheasant tied to an artificial branch of flowering plum:

waga tanomu These blossoms I picked
kimi ga tame ni to for the pleasure of the lord
woru hana ha who to me is all

toki shimo wakanu convey a fidelity
mono ni zo arikeru constant, though the seasons change.

Moved and delighted, the Chancellor gave the messenger a reward.

This episode is an adaptation of an anonymous verse from the *Kokinshū* (866), which reads in its entirety as follows:

kagiri naki They bloom without heed
kimi ga tame ni to to the passing of seasons—
woru hana ha these flowers I pluck
toki shi mo wakanu for the sake of a person
mono ni zo arikeru who enjoys eternal life.

According to some, this poem was composed by a former Minister of State.[214]

The *Ise* author has taken the suggestion that the poem was written ***by*** Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (804–872, the first Fujiwara Regent) and has made it a poem ***to*** Yoshifusa. Moreover, rather than simply using the unchanging flowers ("blooming" out of season) to represent the minister's eternal life, the *Ise* author has added a pheasant *(kiji),* which turns the poem into a *mono-no-na-no-uta,* or poem with a hidden topic—the fourth line *toki shi mo wakanu* now being understood to contain the word for "pheasant" *(to**ki ji** mo wakanu)*. The episode continues the sequence of celebratory verses. Watanabe Minoru sees a dangerous political subtext in Narihira offering Yoshifusa *artificial* flowers.

214. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 190.

99

Back then, on the day of the mounted archery contest at the Right Palace Guard's riding ground, you could just make out a woman's face through the lower blinds of a carriage parked nearby; so this fellow, a Guards Captain, sent her:

mizu mo arazu
mi mo senu hito no
kohishiku ha
ayanaku kefu ya
nagame-kurasan[215]

Mastered by desire
for one I have neither seen
nor failed to see,
must I now helplessly spend
my days staring and sighing?

She answered:

shiru shiranu
nani ka ayanaku
wakite ihan
omohi nomi koso
shirube narikere[216]

Why, what *do* you mean,
babbling on this way about
knowing me or not?
Follow the fire of longing:
it will lead you where you wish.

A little later he found out all about her.

"The day of the mounted archery contest at the Right Palace Guard's riding ground" *(ukon no baba no hiwori no hi)* was actually a four-day event that took place from the third to the sixth day of the fifth month.

This poem exchange and similar prose text are included in the *Kokinshū,* to which the *Ise* author has added a final line after the woman's poem. Following the early modern commentator Azumamaro, Takeoka, unlike most others, insists that the final sentence simply means the man found out who the lady was, not that he came to know her carnally. This seems unlikely, given the coquettish nature of her response. Variants of the same episode occur also in *Yamato monogatari* (Tales of Yamato) and *Konjaku monogatari shū*.

215. *KKS* 476, Narihira. with a headnote similar to the *Ise* text.
216. *KKS* 477, anon.,"reply."

100

Back then this man was crossing a bridgeway outside the Kōrōden when, from an extremely distinguished lady's room, a gentlewoman handed him some forgetting-lily leaves and asked, "Is this the plant you call sweet-memories?" He took them and replied:

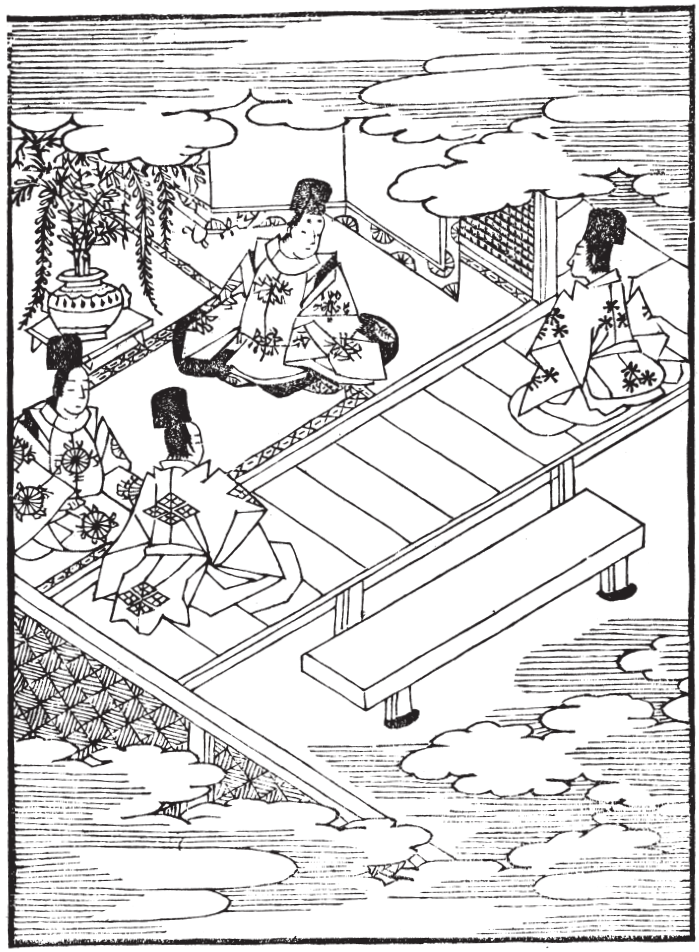
wasure-gusa	Forgetting-lily:
ofuru nobe to ha	in your eyes I am the field
miruramedo	where those flowers grow,
ko ha shinobu nari	but, you see, sweet-memories
nochi mo tanoman[217]	I keep hid and long for more.

The Kōrōden was a building used by imperial consorts, just west of the Seiryōden, the emperor's principal residence. "Forgetting-lily" is *wasure-gusa* (*kanzō, Hemerocallis aurantiaca* Bak.), a kind of daylily. "Sweet-memories" is *shinobu-gusa (noki-shinobu, Polypodium lineare)*. Some commentators claimed that the two were often confused because of the shape of their leaves. In fact, this same poem is included in the *Tales of Yamato (Yamato monogatari),* but there the woman simply asks what the plant is called, and at the end of the episode the narrator remarks: "He composed this poem because another name for the grass of oblivion [*wasure-gusa*] is the herb of remembrance [*shinobu-gusa*]."[218]

This is not the preferred interpretation today. Rather, the lady's question is taken as sarcastic: "you seem to have confused forgetting me with loving me." Significant differences remain, however, about the tone of the man's response. Most commentators take the word *shinobu* in the man's poem as a pivot-word *(kake-kotoba)* meaning both "to remember, to long for" and "to hide, to conceal." Takeoka, however, takes the word only in its first sense, and interprets the man's attitude as brazen and cheeky. He notes that the scene occurs very close to the imperial residence and that the extremely high-ranking lady must use the utmost circumspection. This is why she has her lady-in-waiting thrust the plant out the blinds and ask, seemingly inno-

217. *ShKKS* 1270/1262, Narihira, with a headnote similar to the *Ise* text.
218. Tahara, *Tales of Yamato,* p. 144.

cently, if she has got the name of it right. Takeoka further insists that *nobe* ("field") in the poem also serves as a term of obsequious humility (Modern Japanese, *watashi-me*), and ends up with the following paraphrase: "Yes, yes, just as your ladyship says, I no doubt appear to you as a lo(u)t where the grasses of forgetting grow rank; yes, yes, I would certainly not contradict your ladyship—it is just as you say, these are grasses that declare their longing for you. I pray that you will condescend to meet with me again in the future." In other words, the man is announcing his intimate relationship with the woman out loud for all to hear. Takeoka draws a comparison to Episode 31.



101

Back then there was this man named Ariwara no Yukihira, the Intendant of the Left Watch. The word went out that he had good wine at his place, and he hosted a party that very day. The Left Controller, Fujiwara no Masachika, who had been on duty in the Privy Chamber, served as the guest of honor. Yukihira, a man of taste, filled a vase with flowers, including some astonishing wisteria—the blossom cluster was three and a half feet long. The company made poems about it. They were almost finished when news

of the gathering brought Yukihira's younger brother along to join them. They collared him and demanded that he come up with one, too. He said no, he knew nothing about poetry, but they got this out of him:

saku hana no	Beneath these blossoms
shita ni kakururu	gather in search of shelter
hito ohomi	so mighty a throng,
arishi ni masaru	generous wisteria shade
fujhi no kage ka mo[219]	covers now more than before.

"What's *that* supposed to mean?" they said.

"I was just thinking how much the Chancellor's glory has done for every Fujiwara," he explained.

The subject was dropped.

Yukihira (818–893) was Narihira's older brother (or half-brother, see Episode 84) and became Intendant *(kami)* of the Left Watch in 864. Fujiwara no Masachika was a member of the Ceremonial Branch (Shikike) of the Fujiwara; he became Left Controller *(sachūben)* in 874, by which time Yukihira was no longer Intendant and Yoshifusa had died two years earlier.

In 1973, Morimoto Shigeru summarized the various interpretations of this poem as follows: (1) it includes no sarcasm (Orikuchi Shinobu); (2) it flatters the Fujiwara clan and makes fun of the Ariwara (Fukui Teisuke, Matsuo Satoshi); (3) it satirizes the Fujiwara (Shōhaku, Mabuchi, Takanao); (4) it is indignant at the Fujiwara. Michele Marra summarizes the political reading championed by scholars such as Watanabe Minoru:

> The poem openly denounces the hastiness of courtiers seeking protection under the Fujiwara, a shelter in the shade of the wisteria. Narihira deplores their tendency to hide *(kakuru)* beneath the power of the Fujiwara, disregarding the favors obtained in the past from the Ki and Ariwara families. Still, they do not hesitate to join the Ariwara when feasts are sponsored and the merriment of sake is provided. Narihira charges these courtiers with opportunism in a poem

219. *GYS* 1066/1065, Narihira, "when people came to enjoy themselves at the house of Middle Councillor Yukihira, he put a cluster of wisteria over three feet long into a vase and called for poems to be composed on it. Composed when thinking about the flourishing of the Fujiwara house."

> skillfully developed around the names of both Fujiwara and Ariwara. The first name appears in the expression "wisteria's shadow" *(fuji no kage);* the second is carefully disguised with the word "past" *(arishi),* where the first part of the word, *ari,* stands as an abbreviation for Ariwara. The concealment of the name of Narihira's clan in a word indicating "past" enhances the semantic value of the expression, which finds itself embedded in a historical process to which the poet would like to put an end.[220]

Katagiri and Takeoka both see the poem as chiefly celebratory. Like the celebratory poem of Episode 98, the rhetoric of the poem is unusual, and since the composer says that "he knew nothing about poetry" (a modest pose, Katagiri insists), his audience is quick to criticize. Takeoka argues that the poet is setting them up—the logic of the poem ("the people are many therefore the wisteria's shade is greater than it was in the past") is difficult to understand; Katagiri says that the poem reduces the guests to a "foil" *(hiki-tate-yaku)* for the "amazing" *(ayashiki)* wisteria. At any rate, the poem praises the Fujiwara, grown even more influential since Yoshifusa's career as Chancellor. While Masachika was not part of Yoshifusa's Northern House, and, like his Ariwara hosts, was no more than a middle-ranking aristocrat, he both adds to and partakes of its glory.

220. Marra, "A Lesson to the Leaders." Marra also discusses Episodes 79, 80, 87, 97, 98, and 124 from this perspective.

102

Back then there was this man. He may not have been much of a poet, but he knew all about love. Weary of the same, a distinguished lady had become a nun and settled not in the Capital, but in a remote mountain village. She was a relative, so he sent her:

somuku tote	Put all behind you,
kumo ni ha noranu	and you will yet fall well short
mono naredo	of riding the clouds,
yo no uki koto zo	but the world and its troubles—
yoso ni naru tefu[221]	those, they say, you can forget.

She was the Ise Priestess.

Yūsai saw the claim that the man was "not much a poet" as part of the humble stance Narihira took in the writing of his tale. "He knew all about love" translates *yo no naka wo omohi-shiritarikeri. Yo no naka* means more literally "the way of the world," but was often used to mean specifically "the ways between men and women." Although in relation to Episode 21 Takeoka claims that *yo no naka* does not have this latter meaning in the *Ise,* when the expression is used a second time in the present episode in reference to the woman, *yo no naka omohi-unjite* ("weary of the same"), he insists that the inclusion of the verb *unjiru* ("to become distasteful") strongly suggests that the focus is sexual relations. Medieval commentators such as Yūsai, on the other hand, used its first appearance in the episode to wax eloquent on the need for those who would compose poetry to know the law of impermanence, the ways of the world, the governing of the realm, and the five Confucian virtues.

The poem is essentially a courtesy call on a high-ranking lady who has found refuge in religion and removed herself from the capital—a very unusual action in the first half of the tenth century for a woman of her status. Takeoka suggests on the basis of context and diction that the woman must have indeed been a relative of the poet. Kanera, on the other hand, insisted that the woman was actually the man's former lover, and is identi-

221. *SGSIS* 1302, Narihira.

fied as a relative out of discretion. The final sentence, of course, identifies her as the Ise Priestess (see Episode 69). Although this last sentence is usually viewed as a later interpolation, Takeoka argues that it adds depth to the episode, allowing the reader to imagine that the woman experienced the kind of romantic vicissitudes attributed to the Ise Priestess.

103

Back then there was this man. Utterly sober and true, he had no frivolous urges. He served the Fukakusa Emperor. No doubt it was simple error that got him involved with a woman favored by one of this Emperor's sons. Anyway, he sent her:

nenuru yo no	Our night together
yume wo hakanami	made so sadly short a dream,
madoromeba	I sought sleep again,
iya hakana ni mo	only to find the vision
nari-masaru kana[222]	even shorter than before.

What a dismal poem!

The term *mame* (here "utterly sober") appeared in Episode 2 as *mame-wotoko,* "earnest man," to which the reader may refer. The Fukakusa Emperor was Emperor Ninmyō, and if the woman were Takaiko, later the Nijō Empress, the prince would be the future Emperor Montoku.

The chief problem with this episode has been the apparent criticism of the poem at the end. Yet the poem is included in the *Kokinshū* and is thought of as one of Narhira's better efforts. Commentators medieval and modern have held that the poem does not suit his character, that it is too explicit, or that the final comment is one more example of Narihira's humility. Takeoka and Ishida agree that the term *kitanagesa* ("dismal") should be translated into modern Japanese as *mirengamashii* ("regretful"). Takeoka explains:

> [Their hopes] are at last realized—it is a meeting that should be truly ecstatic. However, since she is "a woman favored by one of this Emperor's sons," he is distracted and cannot relax. Unable even to nod off for a moment, he quickly returns home. He laments such a disappointing and unsatisfying meeting as "empty" *(hakanami),* and his poem is called "regretful" *(kitanagesa yo).*

In other words, like several of the immediately preceding poems, this verse departs from the usual poetic conventions, this time those of a "morning-after poem" *(kinu-ginu no uta).*

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222. *KKS* 644, Narihira, "sent to a lady on the morning after a tryst" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 144).

104

Back then there was a woman who for no particular reason became a nun. She dressed plainly enough, but clearly she still didn't want to miss anything, because off she went to watch the Kamo festival. There this man sent her a poem:

yo wo umi no	What I see reveals,
ama to shi hito wo	plain as she could be, a nun
miru kara ni	weary of the world,
me kuhaseyo to mo	but she will be glad enough,
tanomaruru kana	if I wish, to glance my way.

They say that the sightseeing carriage it went to was the Ise Priestess's, and that when it reached her she gave up watching and left.

The poem here is a complex web of double-entendres. *Umi* means both "weary" and "sea"; *ama* both "nun" and "fisher-girl"; *miru* "to see" and "seaweed"; and *me kuhaseyo* "give me a sign with your eyes" and "feed me seaweed." These pivot-words lend themselves to two completely different interpretations: "Since what I see is a fisher-girl who works the sea, I am hoping she will feed me some seaweed" and "Since what I see is a nun weary of the world [who, given her position, cannot send me a reply-poem], I am hoping at least for a wink of understanding." Embarrassed by the suggestion that her attendance is inappropriate to her new position as a nun, the Ise Priestess abandons her sightseeing. This episode follows on Episode 102.

105

Back then this man sent a woman a message. "You'll be the death of me," it said. She answered:

shiratsuyu ha Dewdrop, by all means,
kenaba kenanan vanish if vanish you must.
kiezu tote Should you linger on,
tama ni nukubeki nobody, I promise you,
hito mo araji wo[223] will thread you on her necklace.

He was terribly hurt, but he thought more of her than ever.

In Japanese poetry, human life was often compared to a necklace of jewels. The jewels, in turn, were often likened to drops of dew.

The woman's response is literally called "rude" (*nameshi,* glossed as *burei*). Takeoka suggests that is precisely because the couple is so close that the woman can compose such a rude poem as a kind of joke. Teitoku was more philosophical: "Although it is annoying that she speaks so lightly of him, still his longing for her increases—surely this is how it is on the road of love."

223. *SSZS* 317, Ōtomo no Yakamochi, "topic unknown."

106

Back then this man went to join the Princes on an excursion, and beside the Tatsuta River:

chihayaburu	When, swift and mighty,
kamiyo mo kikazu	the gods of old had their day,
tatsuta-gaha	Tatsuta River
karakurenawi ni	never ran as now it runs
midzu kukuru to ha[224]	in tie-dyed wavelets of red.

224. *KKS* 294, Narihira.

This is one of Narihira's most famous poems, due to the fact that it is included as his representative verse in *The One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin isshu)* anthology edited by the renowned poet Fujiwara no Teika in the 1230s. The poem originally appears in the *Kokinshū* with the following headnote: "Composed on the topic of autumn leaves flowing down the Tatsuta River, as painted on a screen belonging to the Nijō Empress when she was still called the Mother of the Heir Apparent." In its original context, the poem celebrated the success and glory of the Nijō Empress for giving birth to the Heir Apparent—fortune literally "Unheard of / even in the legendary age / of the awesome gods."

In other words, like Episode 76, this one uses a real poem written by Narihira for Takaiko. Here, however, the *Ise* author does not turn the poem into a love missive alluding to Narihira's and the empress's illicit affair. Instead, he connects it to the episodes associated with Prince Koretaka (e.g., Episodes 76, 77, 81, 83, 97).

As early as the end of the Heian period the final verb in this poem was consistently read as *kuguru* ("to flow underneath or through") rather than *kukuru* ("to tie-dye"), changing the last two lines to "Tatsuta River in scarlet / and the water flowing under it." It was not until Kamo no Mabuchi, in the eighteenth century, that the present understanding of the poem was established.[225]

225. For more on this poem in the context of the *Hyakunin isshu,* see Mostow, *Pictures of the Heart,* pp. 192–194.

107

Back then there was this distinguished gentleman. One Fujiwara no Toshiyuki, a Clerk, was courting a girl of his household, but she was too young to write a proper letter—she didn't know how to say things, and she certainly couldn't manage a poem. So the gentleman wrote a draft for her and had her copy it for sending. Dazzled, Toshiyuki replied:

tsuredzure no Forlorn, idle hours
nagame ni masaru dissolve through long rains to tears
namida-gaha in a swelling stream
sode nomi hichite that merely drenches my sleeves,
afu yoshi mo nashi[226] for want of a way to meet.

The gentleman answered for her, as before:

asami koso Shallowness it is
sode ha hitsurame that wets a mere sleeve or two
namida-gawa in a stream of tears.
mi sahe nagaru to Say you yourself are drowning,
kikaba tanomamu[227] and I will have faith in you.

Toshiyuki couldn't get over this one—they say he still has it rolled up in the box where he keeps his letters.

He sent her another note. This was after she had become his. "It looks as though it's going to rain," he wrote, "and I don't know quite what to do. With any luck, it won't."

As always, the gentleman answered for her:

kazu-kazu ni What with this and that
omohi omohazu I can hardly ask outright,
tohigatami whether you love me,
mi wo shiru ame ha and rain so plain with the truth
furi zo masareru[228] falls now in a flood of tears.

226. *KKS* 617, Toshiyuki.
227. *KKS* 618, Narihira.
228. KKS 705, Narihira.

That did it. Toshiyuki never even paused to grab a rain cape or a hat. He rushed to her and arrived soaking wet.

Fujiwara no Toshiyuki (d. 901), a renowned poet included among the Thirty-Six and One Hundred Poets,[229] was also one of the most respected calligraphers of the Heian period. "Clerk" here is *naiki,* one of the secretaries of the Ministry of Central Affairs, responsible for drafting imperial decrees. Toshiyuki was also a relative of Narihira's: they were both married to grandchildren of Ki no Natora.

All three of these poems are taken from the *Kokinshū* and attributed to Narihira and Toshiyuki, respectively. The headnote to the first reads: "Composed and sent to a lady in Narihira's house"; the second, "Composed on the lady's behalf." There seems to be disagreement concerning the relationship between the introductory prose and the first two poems. Some, such as McCullough, interpret the first poem as a reply to an unrecorded poem sent from Narihira's house, while others, such as Vos and Takeoka, take the two poems to be the exchange described in the introductory prose.

Yūsai identified the girl as Narihira's younger sister, linking her to the girl in Episode 49.

The third poem appears as *KKS* 704, with the following headnote: "Once when Fujiwara Toshiyuki was visiting a lady who lived in Narihira's house, he sent her a letter saying that he was planning to call shortly unless it began to rain too hard. Narihira wrote this on the lady's behalf."[230] In the context of the *Ise,* the phrase *mi wo shiru ame* has given rise to three different schools of interpretation: (1) tears of sadness at having to recognize where I stand in your affections (*Waka chiken shū,* Keichū, and many modern scholars); (2) rain that understands that if you think it's going to rain and you don't come, then you don't love me, but that if you come despite the rain you do (Kanera, Yūsai, and several modern scholars); (3) (picking up on the man's use of the word "luck" or "happiness" [*saiwai*]), rain that understands that if it does not fall I will have happiness and if it does fall I will have unhappiness—a kind of "he loves me, he loves me

229. The Thirty-Six Poetic Immortals *(sanjūrokkasen)* represented the best poets of the *waka* tradition, as chosen by the important poet Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041); the *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin isshu)* was a collection of exemplary poems put together by Teika (see Mostow 1996).

230. Translations of headnotes are all from McCullough, *KKS.*

not" in McCullough's words (Teitoku, Mabuchi, and others). While the second interpretation accords with the meaning of the poem in the *Kokinshū,* Takeoka argues for a changed meaning in the context of the *Ise,* opting for the third interpretation. At any rate, he notes that Toshiyuki's public image would have been one of comparative grandeur, and that contemporaneous audiences would have found the picture of him dashing out into the rain with neither rain cape nor hat quite amusing. Given their relationship, he suggests that Narihira himself may well have written this episode.

108

Back then, a woman resented the way this man felt about her.

kaze fukeba
toba ni nami kosu
iha nare ya
waga koromo-de no
kahaku toki naki[231]

Am I then a rock
washed, once the wind is blowing,
by each passing wave,
that these soaking sleeves of mine
never have a chance to dry?

She kept saying this. He caught her drift and answered:

yohi goto ni
kahadzu no amata
naku ta ni ha
midzu koso masare
ame ha furanedo

Out in the paddies
where every evening cry
a great horde of frogs,
there too the water rises,
but without a drop of rain.

Unlike other episodes, the narrator does not identify the man as "this man" *(kono wotoko),* but simply as *hito* ("man/men"). Moreover, the poem the woman "kept saying" *(tsune no kotogusa ni ihikeru)* is not her own, but one by Ki no Tsurayuki (*Tsurayuki shū* 545—some scholars believe that Tsurayuki in fact had a hand in revising the *Ise*). The man somehow hears about her constant recitation, and realizing, or imagining, that the complaint applies to him, he sends her a poem.

As Takeoka notes, taken separately, the individual poems are clearly ones of longing: one by a fisher-girl for her man, another by a farmer for his woman. And this interpretation can be applied to the *Ise* episode as well, with both poems meaning, in McCullough's words: "Much against my will, I have been prevented from visiting you; I too have shed many tears."[232] However, their combination in one episode rather changes their significance. Most commentators take the man's poem as an unkind response of one sort or another, from a simple "frogs cry and swell the waters even when it isn't raining—crying is your nature, it's not my fault" (Takanao), to reading the "great horde of frogs" as an allusion to the several men the woman is seeing

231. *SKKS* 1040, Ki no Tsurayuki, "topic unknown."
232. McCullough, *Ise,* p. 249, n. 2.

at the same time (Kanera, Yūsai, and others). As usual, Takeoka's interpretation is the most distinctive. He argues: (1) the woman is bitter about some other man, not the one who finally sends the poem; (2) the woman is constantly reciting her poem, and the second man hears it—therefore he must be a frequent visitor to her house; and (3) this second man mistakenly believes the woman's poem applies to him. His poem means: "You say that the passing waves never give your sleeves a chance to dry, but every night in the fields many 'frogs' (men) cry in longing for you, so that even though it does not rain, the waters rise."

109

Back then this man sent to a friend who had lost the woman he loved:

hana yori mo	Blossoms quickly fall,
hito koso ada ni	yet she it was who in truth
narinikere	fell more swiftly still.
idzure wo saki ni	Of the two, which, I wonder,
kohin to ka mishi[233]	did you expect first to mourn?

This poem appears in the "Laments" *(aishō)* book of the *Kokinshū,* attributed to Ki no Mochiyuki (d. before 880?), Tsurayuki's father, with the following headnote: "Someone had planted a cherry tree, but just as it was at last about to bloom, the person who had planted it passed away. Composed on seeing the blossoms." In this context, the latter half of the poem is typically interpreted in the first person: "I had not thought of wondering / which of them I might mourn first."[234]

In some *Ise* texts (such as the *Nurigome-bon*), the poem is attributed to Ki no Tomonori (d. ca. 905 or 907), an older cousin of Tsurayuki and, like Tsurayuki, one of the *Kokinshū* editors. As Watanabe Minoru notes, the final lines of the poem are more appropriate as the lament of a person directly involved, rather than as words of consolation. The *Ise* context robs the poem of the poignant irony of the *Kokinshū* setting, but it reinforces the connection between Narihira and the Ki poets.

233. *KKS* 850, Ki no Mochiyuki.
234. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 185.

110

Back then this man was secretly visiting a woman. “I saw you in my dreams last night,” she told him in a note. He:

omohi amari
idenishi tama no
aru naran
yo fukaku mieba
tamamusubi seyo

The force of yearning
must have sent ranging abroad
some spirit of mine:
should you spy it in the night,
bind it to you with a spell.

In Heian belief, a lover did not dream of his or her beloved; rather the lover appeared in his or her beloved’s dreams (as in Episode 9, poem two). The two lovers in this episode are conducting a secret affair, which makes their meetings difficult and infrequent. The man asks the woman that, should he appear in her dreams again, she recite a spell to bind his soul to her so that he does not have to leave but can stay with her. The spell (to be recited three times) was given by Yūsai, citing the *Fukuro-zōshi* (Fujiwara no Kiyosuke, around 1157):

tama ha mitsu
nushi ha tare to mo
shiranedomo
musubi zo tomuru
shitagahe no tsuma

The soul I see—
who you are
I do not know, but
I bind you down
in the lower hem of my robe.

111

Back then this man sent a great lady a message, ostensibly to convey sympathy for a loss she had suffered:

inishihe ha Once upon a time
ari mo ya shiken such things did no doubt happen,
ima zo shiru and now I, too, know
mata minu hito wo how true it is that you can
kofuru mono to ha[235] love one you have never seen.

She answered:

shita-bimo no When a trouser cord
shirushi to suru mo comes undone, that is a sign,
tokenaku ni they say, but mine is tied.
kataru ga goto ha I take this to mean your love
kohizu zo arubeki[236] falls well short of what you claim.

He replied:

kohishi to ha That I love you—no,
sara ni mo ihaji I will not tell you in words.
shita-bimo no When your trouser cord
tokemu wo hito ha comes undone you will, I trust,
sore to shiranan[237] understand the reason why.

The second and third poems appear as a set in the third imperially commissioned anthology of Japanese poetry, the *Gosenshū* (ca. 950), but in reverse order, and with the man's poem attributed to Ariwara no Motokata (d. 953), Narihira's grandson. In several of the *Ise*'s textual lineages the first poem is set off as a separate episode and/or the second and third poems are missing entirely.

235. *SCSS* 631/629.
236. *GSS* 703/702, anon., "reply."
237. *GSS* 702/701, Ariwara no Motokata.

The man uses the occasion of sending condolences as an opportunity to express his romantic interest in an extremely high-ranking woman. Takeoka suggests there is a pun in ***mada*** *minu hito* ("someone I have not yet seen," that is, the lady) and ***mata*** *minu hito* ("someone I will never see again," that is, the deceased). The man's timing might seem rather callous—Vos suggests the deceased was a servant, which might explain the couple's relative lack of gravity. In any event, Takeoka opines that the couple are only sporting, and we should not imagine them to be seriously in love.

A lady's trouser cord loosening by itself was taken as a sign that someone was in love with her (see Episode 37).

112

Back then this man was deeply involved with a woman who then took up with someone else.

suma no ama no
shiho yaku keburi
kaze wo itami
omohanu kata ni
tanabikinikeri[238]

Sea girl of Suma,
smoke from that salt-fire of yours,
bending to the wind,
has gone trailing off, I see,
where I never would have guessed.

Until the late ninth century, salt was made in Japan by boiling seawater and seaweed in large iron caldrons. This poem is listed an "anonymous, topic unknown" in the *Kokinshū,* and was widely praised by the likes of Sōgi and Yūsai. The Reizei *Ise monogatari shō* commentary identifies the woman as Imperial Princess Senshi. It says that she became the consort of Prince Motoyasu (the fourth son of Emperor Ninmyō) and moved with him to Suma.

238. *KKS* 708, anon., "topic unknown."

113

Back then this man, a widower, wrote:

nagakaranu	Life is hardly long,
inochi no hodo ni	and yet, before it is gone,
wasururu ha	just to forget her—
ika ni mijikaki	ah, when all is said and done,
kokoro naruran[239]	how short is fond memory!

Yamome ("widower" in the translation above) means generally someone without a spouse; it can also specifically mean a widow or widower. Traditionally, the poem was read as one by a man whose wife had deserted him. *Mijikaki kokoro* ("short [on] feeling") can be read as referring to either the woman or the man. In the former, the man is complaining about his wife forgetting him; in the latter (and as translated here), he is reflecting on his own change of heart. The latter reading is reinforced by the fact that the text does not say that the man sent the poem to the woman.

239. *SCSS* 953/951, anon.

114

Back then the Ninna Emperor made a progress to Serikawa and took with him, to handle his hawk, a man who had always served him this way, but who felt that by now age suited him poorly for the task. On the sleeve of his print-pattern hunting cloak this man wore a poem:

okinasabi
hito na togame so
kari-goromo
kefu hakari to zo
tadzu mo naku naru[240]

Ancient I may be,
yet spare me your censure, pray,
for this hunting cloak
clothes me only this one day,
witness the cranes with their cries.

The Emperor's visage betrayed displeasure. The man had had his own years in mind, but His Majesty, who was no longer young, seems to have taken the poem personally.

The Ninna emperor was Emperor Kōkō. This hunt took place in the winter of 886. Large hawks *(ohotaka)* were used during the winter hunt for large birds such as geese, pheasants, and cranes. The hunt was a lively event, and the falconers wore highly decorated outfits—in the *Gosenshū* where this poem also appears it says that the poem was written on the man's sleeve next to a picture of a crane.

The author of the poem is actually Yukihira, Narihira's older brother. Like the verse in Episode 111, the poem here relies on a line being read once with one of its consonants unvoiced and once with it voiced: *kefu ha kari* and *kefu bakari,* or "today is hunting" and "only today." The crane cries because of the hunting and because this will be his last day of life; the poet wears the bright outfit because today is for hunting, and it will be the last time he wears it. Although speaking about himself, the emperor—who was fifty-six at the time—takes it as ill-omened words applying to himself as well. In fact, he died the following year.

240. *GSS* 1077/1076, Ariwara no Yukihira, "on the same day, handling [the Emperor's] hawk, there was the figure of a crane embroidered on the sleeve of his hunting robe, near which he wrote the following."

115

Back then a man and woman were living together in Michinoku Province. "I'm off to the Capital," the man said. The woman was very unhappy, but to make at least a parting gesture she served him wine at Oki-no-ite, near Miyako-shima.

woki no wite	Sharper than the pain
mi wo yaku yori mo	of live coals laid on the skin
kanashiki ha	Oki-no-ite
miyakoshimabe no	burns by Miyako-shima
wakare narikeri[241]	this parting into my heart.

The poem "hides" within it the two place-names of Oki-no-ite and Miyako-shima. *Woki-no-wite* also means "live coals laid on the skin," while *miyakoshimabe no wakare* also means "the separation between capital and islands," that is, that the man is going to the capital and leaving the woman on the island of Miyako-shima. Takeoka claims that as a simple poem of parting the woman's verse seems not exactly right, and opines that the *Ise* author has added the line about "she served him wine" to suggest that the woman composes the poem on the spot, making reference to the coals with which she has warmed his drink.

This poem appears in the *Kokinshū,* attributed to Ono no Komachi. In the *Nurigome-bon* the last line says that the man was so impressed by the woman's poem that he stayed with her after all.

241. *KKS* 1104, Ono no Komachi, "Oki-no-i, Miyako-shima."

116

Back then this man roamed all the way to the province of Michinoku. From there he sent back to the Capital, to someone he loved:

namima yori	Rising from the waves,
miyuru kojima no	yonder, a little island,
hamahisashi	roofs along the shore—
hisashiku narinu	surely it has been too long
kimi ni ahimide[242]	since we were last together.

"Everything's fine now," his message said.

The poetic "trick" of this poem is a linking through sound repetition in a *jo,* or "preface." There is little seemingly logical connection between the two halves of the poem; the poet simply wants to say "surely it has been too long / since we were last together." However, these lines are introduced by the "preface" of the preceding three lines, which are linked to the last two simply through sound repetition: *hamahisashi / hisashiku*.

The poem is based on one found in the *Man'yōshū:*

nami no ma yu	Long are the days
miyuru koshima no	Since last I met you, long
hamahisagi	as the sweet beach-bramble
hisashiku narinu	Growing where the island dunes
kimi ni ahazu shite	are glimpsed between wave and wave.[243]

The tendency among modern scholars has been to see the *Ise*'s change of *hamahisagi* ("beach-bramble") to *hamahisashi* ("roofs along the shore") as due to scribal error. Takeoka rejects this approach, suggesting that the scene of the simple huts reminds the poet of his own domestic situation back in the capital. He suggests, moreover, based on the definition found in the *Shinsen jikyō* (*Newly Edited Mirror of Graphs,* 898–901[244]), that *hisashi*

242. *SIS* 856.
243. Cranston, *A Waka Anthology,* I: 691.
244. *Dictionary of Sources of Classical Japan,* p. 361.

can also refer to a noblewoman's long, flowing hair, further calling to mind the man's beloved.

The last lines of the episode *(nani-goto mo mina yoku narinikeri to nan ihi-yarikeru)* are rather cryptic. Several texts have instead *yoku naworinikeri,* "I have reformed," meaning that the man (Narihira) is assuring his woman (Takaiko) that he has not been philandering along the way. With its setting in Michinoku, this episode is also seen as the final installment of Narihira's *Azuma-kudari* (Journey to the East) that is the subject of Episode 9 and others. Contemporary scholars tend, however, to take the line to mean simply that although the party of travelers has had a hard trip, having ended up in Michinoku, all is well.

117

Back then an Emperor made a progress to Sumiyoshi.

ware mite mo Even I have watched
hisashiku narinu so long by now through the years;
sumiyoshi no at Sumiyoshi
kishi no himematsu the damsel pine on the shore,
ikuyo henuran[245] how many reigns has *she* known?

The deity appeared to him in human form.

mutsumashi to You are close to me,
kimi ha shiranami yet you never knew? white waves
midzukaki no on the shore, shrine fence
hisashiki yo yori ages old—and all this time
ihahisometeki[246] my blessing has been on you.

Sumiyoshi (also Suminoe) has been an important shrine throughout Japanese history. In the *Nihongi,* its three deities are portrayed as advisors to Empress Jingū during her invasion of the Korean peninsula, and later the empress herself was also enshrined here. In addition to being the protector of mariners, in the Heian period Sumiyoshi came to be worshipped as a god of poetry. In visual representations, the shrine is always indicated by its drum-bridge and pine-studded beach.

Pines, as evergreens, are a symbol of longevity. The emperor wonders how many reigns the pines of Sumiyoshi have witnessed. In response, the deity himself appears, asking "don't you know *(shirana)* how close we are?" *Shirana* then links to *shiranami,* the "white waves" that have been lapping around the sacred fence of the shrine for ages, that is, for as long as the deity has been protecting the imperial house.

The poems and their meaning, however, are extremely ambiguous, and several textual variants for this episode exist. Most importantly, many of the variants have the original poem composed not by the emperor, but by

245. *KKS* 905.
246. *SKKS* 1857.

his attendant, Narihira. In such a case, the Sumiyoshi deity's poem is read as addressed not to the emperor, but to Narihira. It was such a reading that formed the basis of mystical interpretations of the entire *Ise* text (see Introduction, pp. 6–7), in which Narihira is a manifestation of the divine powers, bringing enlightenment to his followers through tantric sexual practices. The secret *Gyokuden jinpi no maki* explains:

> The meaning of this poem is: "you are me: why have you forgotten your Original Ground *(honji)?* In the shadow of this pine, I have spent years as a Manifest Trace *(suijaku)*. During that time how much have I benefited living beings? To benefit and save the multitude of living beings, I have been provisionally born in a human body.[247]

247. Klein, *Allegories*, p. 188.

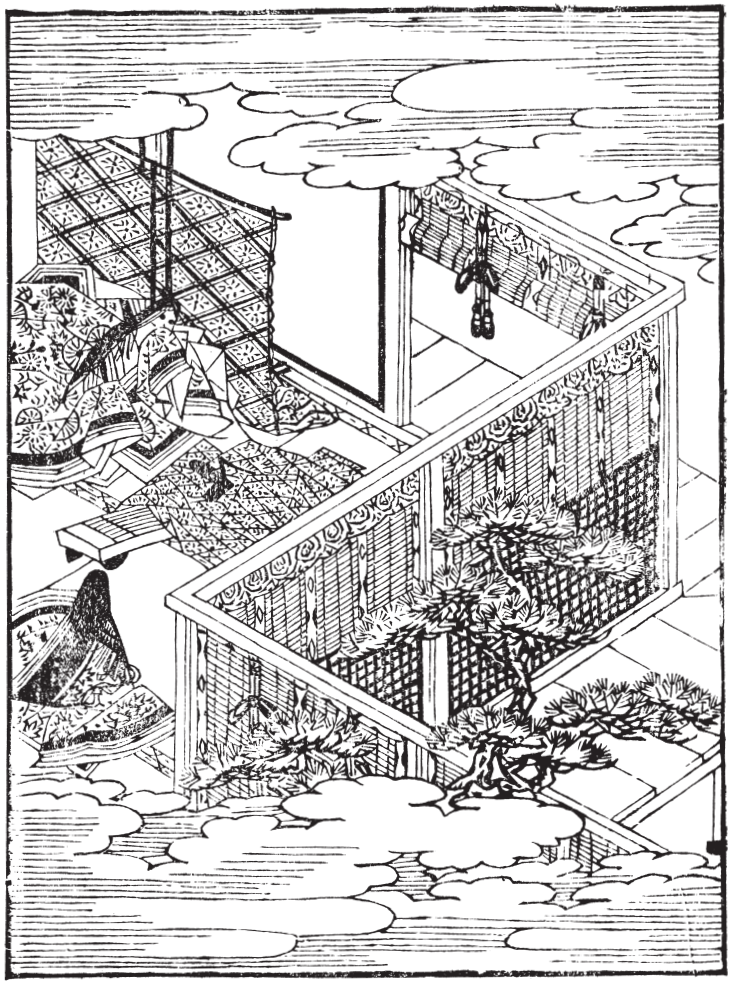
118

Back then this man let a woman know, after a long silence, "I have no intention of forgetting you. I'm on my way." She answered:

tamakadzura	Glossy, creeping vine,
hafu ki amata ni	your tendrils embrace by now
narinureba	far too many trees,
taenu kokoro no	and this loyalty of yours
ureshige mo nashi[248]	is no welcome news to *me*.

Takeoka comments on the man's conceitedness, announcing his imminent arrival after having sent the woman no word for a long while. He also notes the "sensual" *(kannō-teki)* nature of the poem, pointing out that the verb *hafu* means both "to extend," as do plant limbs or roots, and "to crawl along on one's belly." Some manuscript versions have the fourth line as *taenu koto no ha,* or "these loyal words of yours"—*koto no ha* is literally "leaves of words"—connecting nicely with the imagery of the vine.

248. *KKS* 709.



119

Back then this woman caught sight of the keepsakes a faithless man had left her, and she exclaimed:

katami koso These keepsakes of his
ima ha ada nare now are enemies of mine:
kore naku ha if they were elsewhere,

wasururu toki mo I might have at least some hope
aramashi mono wo[249] one day of forgetting him.

The prose introduction calls the man "faithless" *(ada naru)*, and the woman uses a similar sounding word, *ada* (or *ata*)—meaning "enemy"—in her poem.

249. *KKS* 746, anon., "topic unknown."

120

Back then this man learned that a woman he thought was still an ingénue was actually involved with a ranking gentleman. Sometime after that he sent her:

afumi naru
tsukuma no matsuri
toku senan
tsurenaki hito no
nabe no kazu mimu

Let them now begin
the Tsukuma Festival
Ōmi Province loves,
for I would see how many pots
crown your girlish innocence.

The Tsukuma Festival in Ōmi *(afumi)* took place on the first day of the fourth month and required all adult women to follow the sacred palanquin *(o-mikoshi)*, carrying on their heads one pot for every man she had had sexual relations with, and offering them to the shrine.

There is some debate about the phrase *hodo hete* ("sometime after"), with Takeoka (following Orikuchi Shinobu) suggesting that it means that some time passed before the man realized the true state of affairs.

121

Back then this man saw someone leave the Umetsubo (plum) pavilion, wet with rain.

uguhisu no The warbler, they say,
hana wo nufu tefu weaves a plum blossom bonnet
kasa mogana I would have at hand
nurumeru hito ni for your head, wet as you are,
kisete kahesan to return you safely home.

The reply:

uguhisu no The warbler, they say,
hana wo nufu tefu weaves a plum blossom bonnet
kasa ha ina I can do without.
omohi wo tsukeyo Light me, rather, with your fire:
hoshite kahesan I'll dry and return your flame.

The chief topic of debate concerning this episode is the gender of the person leaving the Plum Pavilion: is it a man or a woman? Early commentators such as Kanera and Shōhaku stated that it is not clear who the person is, but he is clearly a friend of Narihira's. In such a reading, as noted by Takeoka (following Morino Muneaki), the first poet is assuming the guise of a woman sending off her lover.

Most modern interpreters, however, take the person to be a woman, reasoning that since the Umetsubo was part of the imperial residential compound, and was used by women serving the emperor, it is unlikely to be the kind of place a man would be sneaking in and out of.

The second poem plays on the word *omohi*, which means "love" or "desire" (modern *omoi*), but also contains the word for "fire" *(hi)*. Much debate, however, has surrounded the last line, *hoshite kahesan*. Takeoka lists four interpretations:

(a) Dry my robe and return it to me;
(b) I'll dry my robe and return home;
(c) I'll dry my robe and then return your "fire"
(d) I'll dry my robe and return the blossom bonnet.

While most commentators follow "c," Takeoka claims that to give back the "fire" expressly offered would be rude, and he opts for "b."

122

Back then this man sent a woman who had broken her commitment to him:

yamashiro no	In Yamashiro
wide no tamamidzu	water from the Ide spring
te ni musubi	filled my hollowed hand,
tanomishi kahi mo	and I drank; but fulfillment
naki yo narikeri[250]	was not to be mine with you.

She never replied.

Tamamidzu, "gem-like water," according to some commentators is also a place-name. The first three lines of the poem serve as a "preface" *(jo)* to introduce the fourth line, which itself contains a pun: *tanomishi,* "to have relied on," and *ta nomishi,* "to have drunk with one's hands." As Takeoka points out, *te ni musubi* ("to cup one's hands together to drink") also suggests *chigiri wo musubi,* "to tie a pledge." Moreover, the image of couples drinking together at a stream is a romantic one found in some *Man'yōshū* poems.[251]

250. *SKKS* 1367.

251. Medieval commentators such as Sōgi and Yūsai related this poem to Episode 169 of the *Tales of Yamato*. See Tahara, *Tales of Yamato,* p. 169 and pp. 268–269.

123

Back then there was this man. He must have tired of a woman who lived at Fukakusa, because he gave her this poem:

toshi wo hete Many years have passed
sumikoshi sato wo since I made our village home,
idete inaba and once I am gone,
itodo fukakusa Fukakusa grass, I fear,
no to ya narinan[252] may deepen to wilderness.

She answered:

no to naraba If to wilderness,
udzura to narite then I shall become a quail,
naki-woran crying through the brakes.
kari ni dani ya ha Surely, love, you will not fail
kimi ha kozaramu[253] to come at least for the hunt.

He was so touched that he lost all desire to leave her.

These poems appear in the *Kokinshū* with the following headnote: "Living in the village of Fukakusa, he thought to make his way to the capital, and sent the following to one who remained behind." The first poem is attributed to Narihira and the second is listed as anonymous. The poem is an example of *katoku,* or the power of poetry, where the woman's clever response convinces the man not to abandon her. Shōhaku approvingly cited here the phrase from the *Kokinshū*'s Kana Preface, that Japanese poetry "brings harmony to the relations between men and woman."[254]

Fukakusa means literally "deep grasses," and these poems seem to have established the poetic association between the place, quails *(udzura),* and loneliness *(u)*. Some commentators take the phrase *kari ni* in the woman's poem to be a pun, meaning both "to hunt" and "temporarily." If so, then this is the same wordplay that was read into Episode 1 by the Reizei *Ise monogatari shō*.

252. *KKS* 971, Narihira.
253. *KKS* 972, anon., "reply."
254. McCullough, *KKS,* p. 3.

124

Back then this man was moved for one or another reason to write:

omofu koto	What is in my heart—
ihade zo tada ni	no, I shall leave it unsaid
yaminubeki	now and forever.
ware to hitoshiki	There is simply no one else,
hito shi nakereba[255]	anywhere, at all like me.

This poem does not appear in posthumous collections of Narihira's poetry such as the *Zaichūjō shū* or *Narihira shū,* indicating that it comes from the latest layer of textual accretions. Nonetheless, both Katagiri and Takeoka praise the placement of this verse as the penultimate poem of the collection. The poem is technically a *jukkai,* or lament about one's situation, but as Katagiri argues, just what the poet is complaining about is left to the interpreter's imagination: His lack of advancement at court? His resentment of Fujiwara high-handedness? Or is the poem indicating that the poet has attained some kind of mystical realization?

This last is of course the interpretation supplied by the tantric commentaries. Tameaki's *Gyokuden jinpi no maki* states:

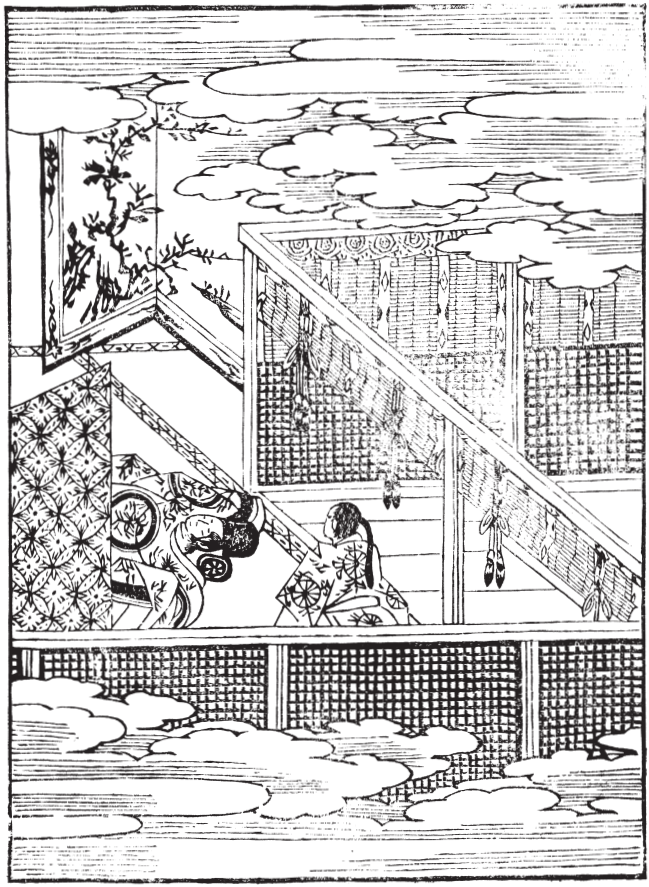
> Now as for Narihira's true intent and conception lying behind this poem, it signifies that he would not speak of how *Ise monogatari* was created or of the Path of Intercourse between men and women. When Narihira was fourteen, he became a disciple of the Grand Archbishop Shinga, and from the age of sixteen to twenty-eight, he studied the inner secrets of Shingon . . . Thus the phrase "I'll just keep my thoughts to myself and say nothing" *(omou koto iwade)* means "remain silent and do not reveal the deep secrets of Shingon." Because Narihira was especially steeped in passion, Shinga transmitted the true meaning of Shingon, keeping nothing back.[256]

Meiji-period scholars, in contrast, insisted that what Narihira could not express was his resistance to the Fujiwara regents and support of Prince

255. *SCSS* 1126/1124, Narihira. "topic unknown."
256. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 206.

Koretaka.[257] For his part, Takeoka emphasizes the plaintive nature of the poem, but argues that seen in relation to Narihira, it is the disillusionment of love that the poet is regretting. In all cases, it was this penultimate episode that premodern interpreters took to be the key to the *Ise* as a whole, in contrast to the first episode, which is seen by modern scholars to be fundamental in its introduction of the keyword *miyabi* ("courtliness").

257. Mostow, "Gender and Courtliness," pp. 102–103.



125

Back then this man fell ill and knew that he was dying:

tsuhi ni yuku
michi to ha kanete
kikishikado
kinofu kefu to ha
omohazarishi wo[258]

That this path is ours,
every one of us, to take,
I heard long ago,
yet never imagined, then,
yesterday or today.

258. *KKS* 861, Narihira, "composed when he was ill and failing" (McCullough, *KKS,* p. 188).

This, along with the previous episode, is, according to the esoteric *Waka chiken shū,* one of the two episodes that Lady Ise added when she redacted Narihira's tale.[259] There has long been some debate on the nuance of *kinofu kefu to ha* ("yesterday or today"); Yūsai wrote: "The interpretation that this means 'until yesterday I had not thought it would be today' is greatly mistaken. It should be read as simply 'I did not think it would be yesterday or today.' It is 'all living things die.'" Other scholars insist on the difference between the phrases *kinofu kefu* ("yesterday today") and *kefu asu* ("today tomorrow"), with the former emphasizing the passage of time from the past up to the present moment.

Regardless, many commentators, modern and ancient, emphasize the importance of the poem's first word, *tsuhi ni,* "in the end, at last," linking it to Episode 1 and the young man's first love, providing a sense of closure to a story of one man's life.[260]

259. Klein, *Allegories,* p. 216.

260. In the *Nurigome-bon,* Episode 59 is combined with this last section. The poem, in a more elaborate context, also appears in the *Yamato monogatari.* See Tahara, *Tales of Yamato,* pp. 115–116.

Appendix 1

Principal Characters, Commentators, and Commentaries

Arai Munirō	(sometimes misread Mujirō) author of one of the major prewar commentaries and a major reference for postwar translators such as McCullough
Aritsune (Ki no)	(815–877) father-in-law of Narihira
Aritsune's Daughter	believed to have been married to Narihira
Azumamaro (Kada no)	(1669–1736) author of the *Ise monogatari dōjimon* (early 1730s?), written in the form of a child asking questions about Yūsai's *Ketsugi shō,* thus provoking a vehement attack on the latter. Azumamaro is considered one of the founders of the *kokugaku* ("national learning") movement.
Empress of the Fifth Ward	*See* Junshi
Guken shō	*See* Kanera
Gyokuden jinpi no maki	Jeweled Transmission of Deep Secrets, 1273–1278; attributed to Tameaki
Hira-kotoba	*Ise monogatari hira-kotoba,* a vernacular translation of the *Ise* (1678)
Ise monogatari shō (Reizei)	a Muromachi compendium of at least three sources with a core text by Reizei Tamesuke, extant in several differing manuscripts; the best representative of the Reizei interpretive approach and the most often consulted among historical *Ise* commentaries, not only in the late Kamakura period, but also, on a popular level, in the Muromachi (Klein, *Allegories,* p. 262), thanks to its diffusion in *Ise*-based Noh plays
Isei shō	Lectures by Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537), recorded by Kiyohara Nobukata; one of the major Muromachi commentaries
Ise, Lady (Ise no Go)	(d. ca. 939) female poet who served Emperor Uda (867–931, r. 887–897); one of the Thirty-Six Poetic Immortals; believed by medieval

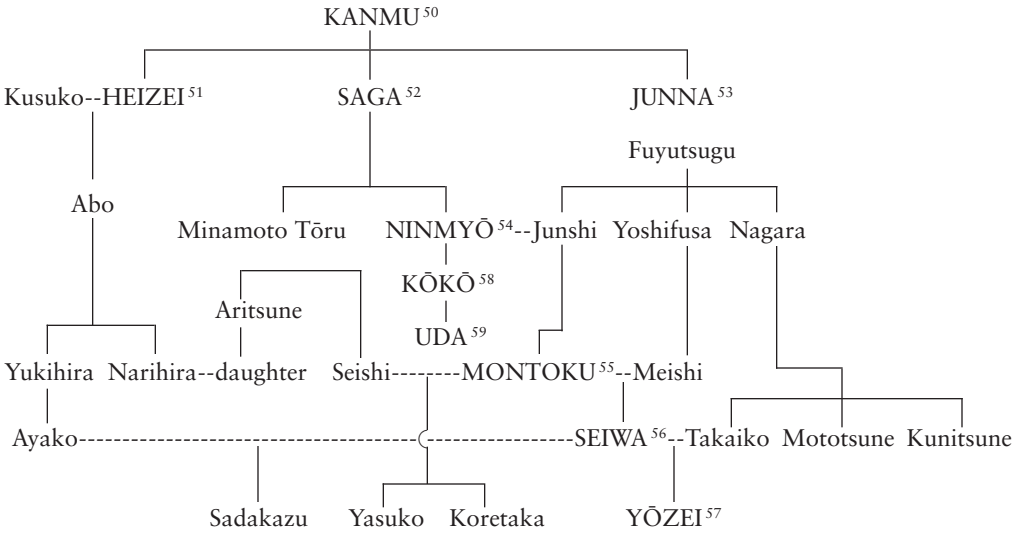
	commentators to have been married to Narihira and to have served as the final redactor of the *Ise,* giving it its title
Junshi (Fujiwara no)	(d. 871) Nobuko, the Gojō (Fifth Avenue or Ward) Empress, consort to Emperor Ninmyō, aunt of Takaiko
Kana Preface	preface in Japanese to the first imperial anthology of Japanese poetry, the *Kokinshū* (905)
Kanera (Ichijō)	(also read Kaneyoshi, 1402–1481) author of the *Guken shō,* the first draft of which is dated 1460 and the second 1474; the first major Muromachi commentary, it criticizes the *Waka chiken shō* and the Reizei school *Ise monogatari shō*
Kaneyoshi	*See* Kanera
Keichū	(1640–1701) pioneer of the philological method and author of the *Seigo okudan* (before 1693)
Ketsugi shō	*See* Yūsai
Kigin (Kitamura)	(1624–1705) author of the *Shūsui shō,* a digest of earlier Muromachi commentaries, but also including the views of Kigin's teacher, Matsunaga Teitoku, as well as his own
Komachi (Ono no)	female poet of the courts of emperors Ninmyō (810–850, r. 833–850) and Montoku; one of the Six Poetic Immortals, believed in the medieval period to have been romantically involved with Narihira
Koretaka (Imperial Prince)	(844–897) eldest son of Emperor Montoku and Ki no Seishi; passed over for the throne in favor of younger brother Seiwa, grandson of Yoshifusa
Kunitsune (Fujiwara no)	(828–908) oldest brother of Takaiko
Mabuchi (Kamo)	(1697–1769) major *kokugaku* scholar and author of *Ise monogatari koi* (printed 1793)
mana-bon	several versions of the *Ise* written solely in Chinese characters *(man'yō-gana),* dating from the Kamakura period
McCullough, Helen Craig	(1918–1998) prominent translator and scholar of classical Japanese literature; her translation of the *Ise* (1968) has been the standard since its publication
Meishi	(d. 900) (Akiko), the Somedono Empress, the Empress Mother, daughter of Yoshifusa, Consort of Emperor Montoku, and mother of Emperor Seiwa

Montoku (Emperor)	(827–858, r. 850–858), son of Emperor Ninmyō, father of Imperial Princes Koretaka (by Seishi) and Korehito (by Meishi), who succeeded him as Emperor Seiwa
Mototsune (Fujiwara no)	(836–891) older brother of Takaiko
Narihira (Ariwara no)	(825–880) son of Imperial Prince Abo (792–842), grandson of Emperor Heizei (774–824, r. 806–809); the purported hero of the *Ise monogatari*
Nijō Empress	*See* Takaiko
Nurigome-bon	a representative manuscript from the "extended texts" *(kōhon)* line of texts written before Teika's *Tenpuku-bon,* the so-called "old texts" *(kohon)*
Orikuchi Shinobu	(1887–1953) pioneering Japanese folklorist; his lecture notes on the *Ise* are extant and published
Sanetaka (Sanjōnishi)	See *Isei shō*
Seishi (Ki no)	sister of Aritsune, consort to Emperor Montoku, and mother of his eldest son, Imperial Prince Koretaka
Seiwa (Emperor)	(850–880, r. 858–876) son of Emperor Montoku and Fujiwara no Meishi, father of Emperor Yōzei
Shinshaku	*See* Takanao
Shōhaku (Botanka)	(1443–1527) disciple of Sōgi and author of the *Shōmon shō,* one of the four major Muromachi commentaries
Shōmon shō	*See* Shōhaku
Sōgi	(1421–1502) major *renga* master and teacher, his lectures on the *Ise* were recorded by Shōhaku and others
Somedono Empress	*See* Meishi
Takaiko (Fujiwara no)	(842–910) a.k.a. Takako, the Nijō Empress, Kōshi, the Empress of the Second Ward, the Second Avenue Empress; niece of Yoshifusa, sister of Mototsune and Kunitsune, niece of Empress Junshi, cousin of Empress Meishi, consort of Emperor Seiwa, mother of Emperor Yōzei
Takanao (Fujii)	(1764–1840) author of the *Shinshaku,* the last major Edo-period commentary on the *Ise*
Tameaki (Fujiwara no)	(ca. 1230s–after 1295) grandson of Teika and connected with tantric interpretations of the *Ise*
Teika (Fujiwara no)	(1162–1241) dominant poet of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods; his various collations of

	the *Ise* were taken as the standard text since the medieval period
Teitoku (Matsunaga)	(1571–1653) famous Edo-period *renga* master, he was one of the first to lecture publicly on the *Ise;* his opinions are included in Kigin's *Shūshi shō*
Tenpuku-bon	the standard version of the *Ise,* transcribed for a granddaughter by Teika in Tenpuku 2 (1234); the manuscript was owned at one point by the Sanjōnishi family, where it was copied. The original is now lost, but the best copy, currently owned by Gakushūin University, is attributed by some to Sanetaka. This manuscript has served as the basis for all modern editions.
Ueda Akinari	(1734–1809) famous Edo-period author and scholar; authored the brief *Ise* commentary entitled *Yoshi ya ashi ya*
Vos, Frits	(1918–2000) distinguished Dutch scholar, first translator of a complete English version of the *Ise* (1957)
Waka chiken shū	an esoteric interpretation of *Ise,* probably produced by Kantō-based students of Fujiwara no Ietaka; the Sanjōnishi, or Shoryōbu, line includes Tameaki's tantric interpretations
Yoshifusa (Fujiwara no)	(804–872) head of Northern Branch, father of Meishi, who was consort of Emperor Montoku; first commoner to hold office of Chancellor *(dajōdaijin* or *daijōdaijin),* Regent *(sesshō)* to Emperor Seiwa
Yōzei (Emperor)	(868–949, r. 876–884); son of Emperor Seiwa and Takaiko, he was removed from the throne by Fujiwara no Mototsune and replaced by his granduncle Kōkō (830–887, r. 884–887)
Yukihira (Ariwara no)	(818–893) older (perhaps half-) brother of Narihira
Yūsai (Hosokawa)	(1534–1610) major politician, poet, and scholar; author of the *Ketsugi shō,* the most influential commentary on the *Ise* throughout the early modern period; it is based on lectures by Sanjōnishi Saneki (1511–1579)
Yūsai's teacher	Sanjōnishi Saneki (1511–1579)
Zuinō (Ise monogatari zuinō)	a Kamakura-period tantric commentary written by a member of the Tachikawa sect, dating from the 1320s or 1330s

Appendix 2

Family Tree of Principal Characters



Numbers refer to emperors in order of ascension. Based on Bowring, "*Ise monogatari:* A Cultural History."

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